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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Questions of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): First, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for having introduced this report to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Motoc and the delegation of Romania for drafting the report. I would, in addition, like to extend a word of recognition to the Secretariat for providing support in the preparation of the document.

The submission of an annual report by the Security Council to the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant articles of the United Nations Charter is a practice that flows from the fact that the Council was entrusted by Members with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and it acts on their behalf in that regard. Reporting is a practice that promotes accountability, as it allows the wider United Nations membership to discuss and assess the Council's achievements and failures, its shortcomings and working methods.

As the present report shows, the agenda of the Security Council has become increasingly complex, going far beyond classic situations of inter-State conflict or even of struggles at the domestic level that are likely to endanger international peace and security. That trend, which has been apparent for the past 15 years, is ever more pronounced nowadays. The Security Council currently deals with a variety of issues such as post-conflict peace-building, economic reconstruction, promotion of justice and the rule of law, national reconciliation, activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, conflict prevention, the fight against terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, among others. Today the Council's active agenda consists of more than 70 items. Some of them are new, while others have been before the Council for decades. The difficulty in securing peace and security stands as a grim reminder of the limitations that are presently inherent in the Council's work and structure.

The nature and volume of those issues are leading the Council to alter, even revise, its procedures, methods and tools. Meetings are held every day, sometimes concurrently, as happened this morning, yet the Council's monthly programme of work does not seem to allow for all issues under consideration to be discussed with the necessary time and in-depth analysis they require.

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Such developments take place against the backdrop of what we believe is a disturbing tendency to apply a range of explicit enforcement provisions under Chapter VII not only to actual threats to international peace and security, but also to potential ones. Moreover, increasingly loose reference to Chapter VII has led to its becoming a conceptual umbrella for issues not directly related to security, and has even led to situations in which the Security Council might potentially interfere with the legal and political prerogative of States, such as treaty-making. That is not, in our view, the most judicious use of provisions intended to be used as a last resort, whose implementation should result from thorough assessment grounded in sound criteria and sound political judgement.

The Council should not allow ambiguities to seep into its resolutions and its decisions; nor should it tacitly permit profuse resort to Chapter VII, which could negatively affect multilateral efforts aimed at promoting collective action with a focus on cooperation. Indeed, cooperation is clearly a legitimate approach that, even in crucial cases, may have greater potential for effectiveness.

As a current non-permanent member of the Council, Brazil has itself been directly confronted with questions that stem from today's challenging agenda, and we are actively engaged in finding specific, precise responses. It seems clear to us that, in many contemporary conflicts, action aimed at restoring peace and security must be combined with measures that promote social and economic development. Considerations such as these have been guiding the Brazilian approach to many issues related to conflicts being considered by the Council.

For instance, with regard to Haiti — which unfortunately had to be reintroduced into the agenda less than a decade after an earlier involvement by the Council — Brazil has supported the idea of engaging the international community, together with the authorities in Port-au-Prince, in designing a long-term development strategy aimed at achieving long-term stability and combating poverty, thus facilitating peace and democracy in that country.

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, we joined an initiative involving the Economic and Social Council and international financial institutions that seek to work with the transitional Government to create conditions for national growth and prosperity. The initiative is an effort to prevent social and economic strife from degenerating into yet another West African conflict of major dimensions.

A third case in point is Timor-Leste, where we have actively urged the Council to continue to provide the new nation with the support it needs in order to consolidate the institutions that are essential to secure a future of stability and prosperity. That would help to ensure that the international community's peace and security investment in that country and other efforts there are not wasted.

Sustaining such interdisciplinary action — which in many ways is also innovative — requires not only increased attention by the Council but also frequent and fluid interaction on the part of the Council with other main organs of the United Nations, as well as broader participation by the membership. Brazil is of the view that both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can do much to contribute to the adequate assessment of, and effective response to, the multidisciplinary challenges with which the Security Council is currently confronted. I need not stress that the United Nations Charter already clearly provides for such institutional partnerships, as in Article 12, paragraph 1, concerning the General Assembly, and in Article 65, with respect to the Economic and Social Council. We also welcome regular meetings among the Presidents of the main bodies of the United Nations system.

The practice of holding frequent open debates and public meetings is highly useful, as it allows the Council to devote attention to a broad spectrum of opinion on the issues before it and, in fact, enhances the quality of the Council's deliberations. In addition, briefings by the presidency in meetings with troop-contributing countries, besides promoting transparency and accountability, add greater focus to those deliberations.

In the context of the reform exercise, we should explore all such possibilities to the fullest in order to provide greater leverage to the United Nations system as a whole in addressing contemporary challenges.

The current session of the General Assembly promises to be crucial for the adoption of decisions regarding the reform of the Organization aimed at better equipping it to deal with the growing threats and challenges that characterize present-day international

reality. In that effort, reform of the Security Council is a task that should no longer be put off. For many years, a decision on that issue has eluded us, as not enough progress has been made within the framework of its consideration by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Based on a shared conception of the need for fundamental reform in the composition of the Security Council, my Government recently joined Germany, India and Japan in expressing joint support for reform that meets the expectations of the majority of Members of the Organization. We will work together with other like-minded Member States towards meaningful reform of the United Nations, including that relating to the composition of the Security Council. We are convinced that Africa must be represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council, and we welcome the presentation of candidatures of countries from that region for a permanent seat.

The question of United Nations reform — particularly the need for the Security Council to become more representative, legitimate and effective — has, in effect, acquired unparalleled relevance and urgency for most Members of the United Nations. In this session's general debate, 148 out of the 190 representatives who took the floor expressed their views on these issues. In that regard, my Government wishes to take this opportunity to express its heartfelt recognition and appreciation to all those who have manifested — on that occasion and at today's meeting — the support of their countries for a Brazilian permanent membership in an expanded Security Council.

On the basis of the perceived need to bring the United Nations and its principal organs up to date with current international realities, the Secretary-General established the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Its findings and recommendations will be available by the end of this year. Last week, during the debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), I had the opportunity to express my Government's broad expectations with regard to the work of the Panel. On that occasion, I stressed the importance of not considering the threats and challenges facing the Organization strictly from a perspective of coercion and the use of force; of putting forward recommendations aimed at strengthening not only the Security Council, but also the other principal organs of the United Nations; and of avoiding the expansion of the scope of Security Council action in a manner that would interfere with the mandated functions of the other main bodies. I also emphasized the need not to mistake the increased activity of the Council in recent years for a sign that that body is functioning well. Such activity is rather evidence of the increasingly fragile foundations of international peace and security. Finally, I stress the need to heed the call of the international community for greater multilateralism.

Now, I wish to add a few remarks that pertain specifically to the reform of the Security Council. First, it is necessary to take into account adequately the expectations of the Member States. It is certainly significant that more than half of the 148 Member States that referred to the issue of reform of the Security Council during the general debate explicitly put forward the view that the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent member categories. Secondly, and no less significantly, only five countries expressed a preference for a partial, more limited kind of Council expansion.

Thirdly, nearly all of those Members that defended an expansion in both categories were of the opinion that there should be new permanent seats for developing countries, some of which, including my own, were specifically mentioned, as I noted earlier.

The views of Brazil on the issue of the reform of the Security Council are today shared by many and come as no surprise. The Security Council must be strengthened and made more representative and legitimate. Its composition, in particular as concerns its permanent membership, can not remain unaltered. It can no longer ignore the emergence on the international scene of developing countries that have become important actors, both regionally and globally and often exercise a critical role in promoting the pacific settlement of disputes.

We must also incorporate, on a permanent basis, countries that have the will and the capacity to take on major responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. In short, better representation confers greater legitimacy, and greater legitimacy increases the efficiency and efficacy of the work of the Council.

On the basis of those considerations, Brazil is ready to work, through the intergovernmental process and together with our partners and the wider membership, in a common effort to make the Organization a better reflection of its Members' aspirations for a more peaceful and just world. It is a task that is pressing on us now and must be accomplished.

Mr. Requeijol Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the third time that a brief analytic summary is included in the annual report which, although still insufficient, marks a step forward towards the objective of having truly substantive reports on the work of the Security Council.

Without disregarding the value of the current report as part of the Council's institutional memory, we still hope for a text with greater analytical content, which presents the political and legal grounds of, at least, the most important decisions the Council adopts.

We believe such a report should reflect not only what has been done, but also what has not been achieved and the reasons why this has occurred, particularly in cases where the Council has failed to act or when it has visibly lacked unity. Thus, there must be more analytical details on divided votes, especially in those cases where a negative vote of one of its permanent members was recorded. For instance, during the term under consideration, the veto was exercised on four occasions; three of them involved the United States voting against draft resolutions on the Palestinian question.

As long as the Council does not succeed in changing its current practices, its annual report should comprise detailed information on the discussions carried out in closed meetings, including the diverging opinions Council members may have on given issues.

Due to the limitations still characterizing the annual report, the only meagre means available at the moment to obtain bits of information concerning closed meetings are the informal briefing meetings, which are carried out by the rotating presidency and are of varying quality and consistency, and that presidency's subsequent monthly assessment.

The General Assembly still does not receive the special reports which, under the Charter, the Council should submit when necessary. During the current term, we have also seen actions and omissions by the Council that would have merited the preparation of a special report to the Assembly, which would have contributed to promoting the active interrelation between both bodies that we all hope for. The Assembly would then be able to formulate useful recommendations for the work of the Council.

In that sense, we consider vital the full implementation of relevant resolutions adopted by this Assembly, for instance, resolutions 51/193 and 58/126; the latter contains provisions in its section A referring not only to the quality of the Council's annual report, but also to a follow-up to the results of the debate we are having today.

We reiterate that our demands do not represent simple academic curiosity, but the fact that Member States represented in the Assembly have the legitimate right to expect appropriate accountability from the body, of limited composition, to which we have entrusted the prime responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security and which, pursuant to the Charter, acts on behalf of all Member States.

There will not be true reform of the United Nations without reform of the Security Council, a body where the principle of sovereign equality is institutionally and flagrantly violated on a daily basis.

The rule of international law cannot be re-established, particularly that of the Charter, nor can there be democracy within this Organization as long as the Council exercises totalitarian power. It is also true that Council members, including the permanent members, also endure the dictatorship of the super-Power established by the strength of arms and money.

It is well known that the veto was the reflection of an international balance that does not even exist today, and Member States, with few exceptions, agree that the veto must be eliminated.

However, the essential fact is not so much the legal aspect of the veto but mainly the powerful forces that suppress the other permanent and non-permanent members and Member States. Such forces govern the essential processes of the world economy, finance, military supremacy and also the precarious and temporary equilibria; the same correlations that hamper the exercise of the physical majority of the non-permanent members also prevent the General Assembly from regaining the powerful functions entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter, given the

political, military and financial realities of this era. Until such time as the elimination of the veto is achieved, its use should be limited to Chapter VII of the Charter, as a first step towards that aim.

The Security Council should be broadened to include new permanent and non-permanent members. New permanent and non-permanent posts — created in the Council as part of its broadening — should be entrusted with the same prerogatives as the current members have.

The objective of the enlargement should be to correct the insufficient representation of developing countries. Two or three developing countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, two or three from Africa and two or three developing countries from Asia should join as permanent members, with the same prerogatives of those currently possessing them, including the veto.

As stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, if agreement is not reached in other categories, at least the number of non-permanent members should be increased for the time being. Greater transparency in the work of the Security Council is an urgent matter. Decisions taken within that body have ever-increasing direct or indirect implications on all Member States, in an increasingly interdependent world. Furthermore, many of these decisions, when carried out, should be financed by all Member States, and not only by those taking such decisions.

The annual report of the Security Council should include more illustrative statistics, including percentages, on the number of public meetings and consultations of the whole and the time devoted to them. This would provide us with more detailed information for debate in the General Assembly and give us a deeper understanding of why the Security Council still continues to do the majority of its work behind closed doors, despite the fact that this not only contravenes the Council's rules of procedure but has also been emphatically and repeatedly qualified as unacceptable by most Member States.

It is not only necessary to increase the number of open meetings, but also to turn them into genuine opportunities to properly take into account the opinions and contributions of States who are not members of the Council. Similarly, it would be useful to establish minimum briefing requirements for the monthly reports of the Council President.

Overcoming secrecy in the work of the Council would allow our Governments to obtain the information they need to make timely policy decisions. In this context, we would like to thank those members of the Council, especially countries belonging to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Non-Aligned Movement caucus, which have undertaken specific efforts to keep us as well informed as possible on the work of the Council.

The Security Council also violates both the spirit and letter of the Charter through an increasingly voracious and intrusive agenda which usurps the functions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) is a clear example of this and of the interest on the part of certain States in transforming the Council into a body that adopts texts which, in practice, are similar in scope to international treaties. We consider that international legal obligations, including those related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, should not be legislated for all Member States without their full participation and sovereign acceptance through their signature and ratification of relevant treaties and agreements that have been negotiated multilaterally.

While the Security Council oversteps its remit on certain issues, on others it succumbs to stalemate, such as we see regarding the situation of the occupied Palestinian territories, and this is a matter of concern.

Furthermore, there is no logical explanation for the fact that the Council's rules of procedure continue to be provisional after so many years of being in force, and that it has not been amended for more than 20 years.

Finally, we consider that the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should continue to work with renewed energy.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): Like previous speakers, San Marino wishes to make its contribution to the discussion of item 53 on the General Assembly's agenda, concerning the question of equitable representation on, and increased membership of, the Security Council and related matters. We want to thank Ambassadors Wenaweser and Gallegos for the excellent work they have done.

The Security Council was created as an instrument to prevent and remove international threats and to ensure peace and security. This body is still the only one that can authorize the collective use of force, and for this reason it must be representative, responsible, efficient and, most importantly, capable of adapting to the new challenges that the international community faces. For this reason, an increase in Security Council membership is necessary but must be carefully thought out.

Some delegations have expressed their concern regarding the fact that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform has not yet obtained results despite many years of intensive activity. There is here an implicit criticism which, in my view, seems to be directed at a group of countries whose only fault lies in having opposed the ways and means of reforming the Council, as proposed by another group of countries. The international community bears common responsibility for its lack of readiness to take a decision on this extremely sensitive matter; this state of affairs reveals the danger of instituting reforms which do not meet international standards of democracy and fairness.

San Marino is convinced that a decision on the enlargement of the Security Council, to be effective, must be made on the basis of consensus, or at least general agreement.

Reiterating what my country's Foreign Minister, Mr. Fabio Berardi, stated during the general debate, San Marino favours an increase in the number of non-permanent members as appropriate. Such an enlargement would ensure greater participation by all countries in the Security Council, with more equitable geographical representation through democratic elections in the General Assembly.

The contribution of a State to the work of the Security Council consists not only in its participation in the Council, but also in the expression of its preferences for the most qualified candidates to serve on the Council in a particular period of history, which it does when electing them in the General Assembly. Seventy-eight Member States of this Organization have never served in the Security Council. For those countries, participation in the democratic process of electing members to the Security Council is a most important and valuable contribution which they bring to the work of the Security Council.

The extension of the privileges of permanent membership to other countries would mean creating additional injustice, discrimination and inequality. San Marino is in favour of gradually restricting the right of veto, with a view to its eventual elimination. The veto is a vestige of the past, which grew out of specific circumstances that are no longer present. This anachronism should be limited and discouraged. We believe that the majority agrees on the fact that the use of the veto should be limited to Chapter VII matters and that it should be subject to further limitations such as its suspension, banning the use of the single veto, and prohibiting the use of the veto on questions of reform. We consider it extremely important for permanent members to have the ability to cast negative votes on draft resolutions without vetoing them and we deem it indispensable to introduce the concept of accountability with regard to the veto.

San Marino awaits the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We are confident that the Panel will take into consideration all the above-mentioned aspects of reform in its deliberations. We look forward to availing ourselves of those deliberations as additional food for thought in the discussions of the Assembly's Working Group.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council on its work. I would also like to thank the former President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, as well as Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Ambassador Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein, for their efforts in reinvigorating the discussion in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The United Nations is confronted with new threats, such as internal violence, poverty, infectious diseases, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the inter-State conflicts that the United Nations Charter was originally intended to address.

The Japanese Government regards Security Council reform, which is an initiative to bring the Council in line with the realities of international

politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the central issue of United Nations reform. This is because the Security Council, as an organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must be able to address the aforementioned issues effectively.

The establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change represents an effort by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to improve the United Nations system for addressing those challenges. Along with the work of the High-level Panel, serious discussions have also being going on among United Nations Member States, particularly on the subject of Security Council reform, since the Council must play the central role in matters related to international peace and security.

Japan's position on Security Council reform, as Prime Minister Koizumi stated in the general debate at the 4th plenary meeting, is that, in order for the Council to effectively address its new threats and challenges, countries with the will and resources to play a major role in international peace and security must always take part in the Council's decision-making process. In addition, the Security Council must become more representative in order to better reflect today's world. The Security Council therefore needs to be expanded, both in its permanent and non-permanent categories, adding new members from both developing and developed countries.

It is our conviction that the role that Japan has played in the international community has provided us with sufficient basis for assuming the responsibilities of a permanent member of the Security Council. Japan also supports Brazil, Germany and India as legitimate candidates for permanent membership in the Security Council. In addition, we believe that Africa must be represented in the permanent membership of the Council.

For more than a decade, we have conducted discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In spite of that, we have not been able to arrive at a consensus among Member States on how to reform the Council. In December, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is to issue its report, which is expected to include proposals on Security Council reform. This time, it is incumbent upon us to conduct a serious discussion to seek ways to adjust the Security Council to the current realities of the world. Based on that discussion, we have to produce solid results regarding Security Council reform in the next year, which marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Nothing less than our wisdom, courage and public spirit are challenged, from the global viewpoint, in addressing this issue.

Facts speak more eloquently than rhetoric. In the Chairman's summary of the work of the Open-ended Working Group during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, it was stated that many speakers had expressed support for an increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In the general debate in September, we were able to have a lively discussion on Council reform. By our own count, among the 151 Member States that referred to the need for Security Council reform, as many as 86 supported the expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Dozens more may have wished to express the same viewpoint, but were prevented from doing so by time constraints.

There are thus many nations that believe it is time to expand the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council. In contrast, only six countries supported the expansion of the Council in the non-permanent category only. These figures present a clear picture of what Member States desire in terms of Security Council reform.

There is, thus, substantial impetus among Member States in support of the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent categories of Security Council membership. We must translate this sentiment into the realization of true reform. Japan, along with many other like-minded Member States, will do its utmost to ensure that Security Council reform finally becomes a reality. In view of the substantial interest that many United Nations Members have in this issue, Japan would like to reserve the right to seek further discussion under agenda item 53 during the current session of the General Assembly.

I welcome the Council's voluntary efforts to improve its working methods in recent years. Among other improvements, the frequency of open briefings for non-Council members and of open debates allowing for statements by non-Council members has certainly

increased. I believe that such meetings contribute to the enhanced transparency of Security Council discussions. In order for the varied opinions of Member States to be reflected in the Security Council's discussions, it must provide non-member States with opportunities to participate in Council meetings, especially with regard to those matters in which they have major stakes.

Since the decisions of the Security Council are generally binding on all Member States, it is vital that the views of those States that are major stakeholders be reflected in the decision-making process. By so doing, the Security Council will be able to fulfil its responsibility of being accountable to Member States. It is Japan's hope that the Council will continue to look for means to involve those non-Council members with a vital interest in an issue under discussion more substantially in the Council's decision-making process. For the resolutions that have large budgetary implications on such activities as political missions and the consolidation of peace, in addition to those pertaining to peacekeeping operations, transparency as well as accountability needs to be ensured, particularly vis-à-vis major financial contributing countries.

A mechanism has been established for consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries regarding specific peacekeeping operations. This mechanism needs to be expanded to include major financial contributors as well. In this regard, Japan considers the attendance by non-Council members at meetings of the Working Group of the Whole on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations to be a sign of progress, and looks forward to further efforts by the Security Council for the revitalization of this Group.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): The delegation of Guyana welcomes the opportunity to participate in the joint debate on item 11, "Report of the Security Council", and item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

My brief contribution today will focus on the question of Security Council reform. In so doing, I wish to pay tribute to the efforts made by the President of the General Assembly during its fifty-eighth session, Mr. Julian Hunte, to advance the process of Security Council reform and to impart fresh impetus to our deliberations.

Reform of the Security Council is a matter of fundamental importance to the future of the United Nations. As a small State, relying as we do on this collective system for our own peace and security, Guyana has sought the assurance that a new, reformed Council can provide reasonable protection for our sovereignty and territorial integrity as a matter of paramount importance.

It is now more than four years since world leaders resolved at the Millennium Summit to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. To date, their resolve is yet to be translated into definitive progress. While reform of the Council is arguably the most complex and difficult of decisions for the Organization, without minimizing the complexities involved, it is a decision we cannot escape. The alternative would be to maintain the status quo and risk the erosion of what the Secretary-General has described as the great strength of the United Nations — its legitimacy.

A loss of legitimacy will be detrimental to the United Nations and will undermine its effectiveness. However, with a Security Council that remains essentially wedded to the past, the risk of such a loss has grown. With the membership of the Organization expanding over the past half century, the Council has become increasingly less representative and increasingly more inequitable in its composition. The need for the Council to be adapted to contemporary realities can no longer be ignored.

After more than 10 years of discussion, positions on reform of the Council, including that of my own delegation, are now well known. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a growing inclination for change. Guyana remains steadfast in its view that the veto should be eliminated or at least significantly curtailed. Its limitation to matters under Chapter VII of the Charter could be an important first step in that regard. We have called for expansion of seats in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In respect of new permanent members, my Government has so far pronounced its views only with respect to developing country aspirants. Guyana's Foreign Minister, Mr. Rudy Insanally, speaking in the general debate in September, stated at the 15th meeting:

> "After careful deliberation ... my Government has decided at this stage to support the aspirations of Brazil, India and an African State to permanent

> membership. We believe that their participation as developing States in the work of the Council will make that body more balanced, representative and, ultimately, more accountable to the Assembly for the maintenance of global peace and security."

Furthermore, we continue to hold to the view that in an expansion of the category of permanent members there should be no distinction with respect to rights and privileges between the current and new permanent members. Finally, my delegation also considers that any agreement reached on the reform of the Security Council should be subject to review after some time has elapsed, perhaps after 10 to 15 years.

In conclusion, it is clear that difficult compromises will need to be made if the Security Council is to become more representative, democratic, transparent and effective. Guyana shares the view that the year ahead could be an opportunity to take important decisions that will lead us to the early achievement of that goal. It is incumbent on Member States to summon the political will to move forward, taking due account of the various interests and concerns represented in this forum. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change may yet facilitate our task in this respect.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. Taken as a whole, the information detailed in the report conveys a picture of the busy schedule that characterized the Council's work during the period.

My delegation would like to express its continued appreciation for the Council's focus on peacekeeping and its comprehensive approach to dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, for which it has the primary responsibility. We are especially encouraged by the Council's sustained attention to conflict prevention, resolution and management. We urge it to continue to focus its attention on those issues, given the gravity, complexity and multifaceted nature of the problems and conflicts bedevilling various regions, and the sine qua non of peace and security in the quest to achieve sustainable development and stability. In that connection, we reiterate the need for the Council to continue to enhance cooperation with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other development bodies, given the well known interrelationship between peace, security and development.

My delegation also notes with appreciation the continued devotion of most of the Security Council's efforts to the African region. That has been evident in its various public meetings on several conflict situations on the continent, such as those in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, the establishment of United Nations missions in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and also its visiting mission to West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004. It is our hope that such a devotion of time and effort will translate into concrete and appropriate solutions — coupled with the requisite political will and resources — to the conflicts plaguing the region. Also, as my delegation had occasion to point out last year, for visiting missions to have more impact they should be of longer duration and not involve visits to too many countries in one short trip.

Further, we welcome the continuing consultations and complementary initiatives that the Council has embarked on with regional and subregional institutions and we encourage the Council to stay on course. We are of the firm conviction that such partnerships between subregional and regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, could go a long way in helping to find lasting solutions to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Ghana, in its capacity as Chair of ECOWAS, would like to signal that organization's desire to cooperate with the international community to identify ways in which vital partnerships can prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in the West African region. The leadership and membership of the organization, while counting on beneficial collaboration with others, remain committed to their own projected constructive engagement.

I would like to recall that in earlier years, my delegation added its voice to the call for more information in the Security Council report concerning its missions to conflict areas to acquire firsthand information, if, as we thought it should, the Council was going to continue to rely on this system of Council missions. Permit me to congratulate the members of

the Security Council for improvements in that regard over the past two years, as the present report presents a much more detailed account of those visits.

Over the years, my delegation has been among those calling for further improvement in the report, procedures and working methods of the Security Council. We wish to commend the Council for keeping the new format that it has used in recent years, which is more compact and reader-friendly. However, there is much more to be done to improve upon the analytical framework. This year's report is again characterized by a dearth of the requisite information needed to effectively evaluate the Council's work. Similarly, the rather late publication of the report leaves much to be desired. This has been done in spite of concerns expressed previously by various delegations about the apparent contradiction between its contents, which remain little more than a simple outline of events with scanty analysis or explanations of the Council's actions and decisions, and the amount of time needed to process it. We would like to see this Charter obligation performed in a much more satisfactory manner.

We are encouraged by the number of open meetings and monthly briefings given by Presidents of the Council, as well as by the periodic wrap-up sessions, to which non-Member States have been invited. The open meetings should not be seen simply as a matter of "going through the motions". To be useful, the views expressed by Member States should be taken into account in the real decisions of the Council.

Elsewhere, we wish to commend the Council for its pivotal role in the global campaign against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has been an example of transparency, and we commend it for its efforts in that direction.

The Open-ended Working Group has been seized with the task of considering all aspects of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters since December 1993, with little progress with regard to the Cluster I issues. My delegation believes that the overdue reforms in terms of expansion, decision-making and periodic review of the Council could be resolved within a more democratic, cooperative, equitable and geographically representative framework, reflecting the kind of multilateralism that is required in contemporary times.

It remains an issue of concern that ten years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group so much substantial progress remains to be made. As the events of the past few years indicate, a comprehensive reform of the Council is crucial if its decisions are to continue to enjoy the support of the larger membership.

In this connection, we wholly subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) statement on all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, complemented by the African position on the same issue, as expressed in the Harare Declaration adopted by the Organization for African Unity in June 1997. Africa's claim to have at least two permanent seats on a rotational basis, even as it seeks an expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, should be adequately addressed, since it is the largest regional group in the Organization.

We also endorse the NAM proposal that a periodic review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council is necessary in order to enable it to respond better and more effectively to the new challenges in global relations, especially with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ghana shares the view that, on the Cluster II issues, increased transparency and improved working methods of the Security Council are crucial to ensure that body's accountability to the wider membership of the United Nations. We welcome the various improvements in the Council's working methods, including increased use of public meetings, consultations with regional organizations and the strengthening of consultations between troop-contributing countries, the Council and the Secretariat.

While commending these improvements, we must be quick to add that certain methods of the Council, like discrimination between Members and non-Members of the Council on time limits for statements, have often resulted in the unjustifiable exclusion of the wider membership from effectively articulating their views on specific projects pursued by the Council.

It is primarily through a restructuring of the Council along these lines that perceptions of selectivity in dealing with issues of international peace and

sustainable development can be avoided, and the causes of conflicts, whenever and wherever they occur, can be dealt with in an effective and impartial manner. In this regard, we look forward to the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change set up by the Secretary-General to examine the threats we face and to evaluate existing policies, processes and mechanisms. The recommendations the Panel submits must take into account the principles of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, based on principles enshrined in the Charter, in order to enjoy the full confidence of Member States.

There is no gainsaying the fact that these have been very trying times for the United Nations in the area of peace and security. Our Organization is hard pressed to reassert its indisputable relevance in the present global context. The world desires a United Nations that is, and is seen to be an instrument for achieving common ends towards a just and stable world order.

To conclude, my delegation wishes to restate the imperative need for enhancing the credibility of the Council through substantive reform, guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, so as to enable it to better carry out its Charter obligations.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Some time ago, in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, Uruguay suggested the Group consider new ideas for reform, for it had become clear that, after years of consultations and unsuccessful negotiations, no agreement would be reached if we persisted in working on the same basis, on the same proposals as had been proposed in 1993, when the Group began its work.

Despite genuine efforts on the part of successive Chairmen of the Group, to whom my delegation is deeply grateful, the negotiations have proved fruitless so far. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that, over the years, the objectives we have sought in this exercise have lost clarity and transparency. It is time to clearly define what the objectives are and to designate priorities among them.

The original declared purpose of the reform was to adjust the composition and working methods of the Security Council to fit current political realities in order to turn that body into an instrument better equipped to respond to current threats to international peace and security. To achieve this objective, we have said time and again, even ad nauseam, that we must make the Council a more efficient, democratic and representative body.

But, a second objective has now emerged. Some countries, willing to assume greater international responsibilities, would wish to be given a bigger role in the work of the Council and more influence in its decisions on international peace and security.

Uruguay acknowledges the legitimacy of both objectives. Naturally, we fully agree with the need to reform the structure and working methods of the Council to bring it in line with today's international realities. Furthermore, we understand the aspirations of those States that wish to assume greater responsibilities, those that have the will and that are in a position to do so, and that wish to increase their presence and participation in the Council. But we have to be very careful in choosing the means through which we intend to achieve these two objectives, since they might be incompatible, or one might interfere with the other.

The fact that we are simultaneously pursuing these two different and sometimes incompatible objectives has yielded a number of paradoxes and contradictions. For example, the first contradiction is that, while we do not stop repeating our intention to make the Council a more democratic body, some States that are working towards the second objective are seeking to increase the number of permanent members, which implies extending permanent membership to some new States and thereby extending to them the right of veto, which is the most undemocratic of all privileges.

The second contradiction would be that, while we stress the need for a more effective Security Council, some countries are proposing expansions that would increase membership to 30 or more; this would undoubtedly affect its ability to function effectively. Such a move would accentuate the deliberative character of the Council at the expense of its executive nature, thus protracting negotiations, making the path to agreements more difficult, and weakening the content of its decisions.

The third contradiction is that, while we speak of the urgent need to make the Council more representative, we have not formalized the one idea that would undoubtedly help us attain that objective and on which we all agree, namely to increase the number of non-permanent members. There are not, and have not been, any diverging views in that respect. Not a single country is opposed to increasing the number of non-permanent members. However, despite that general agreement, and despite the need to give the Council greater legitimacy and make it more representative, that idea has been held hostage to other, infinitely more controversial ideas.

That is all the more regrettable because, had we, at the beginning of consultations on this question, decided on an increase of, say, 10 new non-permanent members — a number that would probably be acceptable to all — over 50 countries would have participated in the work of the Council as non-permanent members over the past 10 years, in addition to the 50 that actually have done so.

We are pleased that some new ideas have been proposed lately that give us hope that we might finally achieve agreement on reforming the Council. Uruguay has always been very flexible on that issue. We are therefore ready to consider any proposals for reform that are designed not only to increase the democratic representativity of the Council but also to satisfy the aspirations of those States that are willing to shoulder greater responsibilities by increasing their presence on and participation in the Council, provided, of course, that there is no impact on either the democratic nature of the Council or the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States — the principle governing equitable representation and equal rights in international organizations.

With that understanding, we are ready to consider proposals that include more extended or frequent terms for some of the States that might take the new seats in an expanded Council. In any event, selection of new members should occur within the context of their respective regions, with due regard, of course — as set out in the provisions of Article 23 of the Charter relating to non-permanent members — for their contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security, and I refer here to contributions in the broadest sense of the term, not just financial.

In view of the difficulties that have prevented the attainment of a general agreement after 12 years of consultations, Uruguay believes that we must change the approach to the reform process and try to move forward in stages, gradually formalizing those reforms that are already agreed by all Members.

Uruguay will continue to participate in efforts to reform the Council. We will be flexible, but we will always remember that it is necessary to preserve intact the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we should like to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the presentation, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, of the annual report on the activities of the Council.

The report that the Security Council submits to the General Assembly represents one of the most important sources of information for the Members of the Organization that do not participate in the decision-making process of that organ, as it helps them to know the status of different issues under consideration.

Mexico has stressed that this report should become increasingly substantial and analytical in nature in order to complement the efforts of other organs of the United Nations system.

The division of competencies among the principal organs of the United Nations, as provided for in the Charter, bestows concurrent powers on the Council and the General Assembly in the context of the preservation of international peace and security. There can be no doubt that those provisions give the Council special powers vis-à-vis those of the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the Security Council has a responsibility to the whole of the membership of the United Nations in the exercise of its duties. Consequently, Members recognize the fact that the Security Council acts in their name when fulfilling the functions imposed on it by that responsibility. That is the source of the legitimacy and value of its decisions.

That responsibility also entails an obligation to provide substantive information about the measures that it has decided to take in order to maintain or restore peace and security, in accordance with Articles 24 and 15 of the Charter. Those two articles state that

the General Assembly will receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council.

Originally, both articles were proposed with the intention of giving the General Assembly the right to validate the actions of the Security Council. Because of opposition by the great Powers to that initiative, no clear commitment was made for the Security Council to be accountable to the General Assembly. The content of both provisions, which is certainly ambiguous, reflects that tension.

In practical terms, we can see that the result has been a rather pro forma, rather than substantive, compliance with the requirement that the Security Council submit reports to the General Assembly. That implies, in other words, the absence of an effective system of accountability. That shortcoming should be remedied in order to permit the adequate functioning of our collective security system.

Indeed, accountability is a powerful reminder of the shared responsibility and the cooperation that are required today to address the trans-national threats that we all face.

The importance of the responsibility conferred on an organ of limited composition such as the Security Council should be sufficient reason for the existence of an effective accountability system. The absence of such a system gives the impression that the members of the Security Council do not need the collaboration or cooperation of the rest of the membership, and that impedes the functioning of a collective security system.

As stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico at the 10th meeting, during the general debate, Mexico favours "a regionally equitable and balanced enlargement of the number of elected members, based on modalities determined within the regional groups" and a guarantee of equal opportunities for all.

In that context, Mexico would favour proposals to increase the number of elected members, with longer mandates and with the possibility of immediate re-election, because we believe that this would strengthen accountability, which we consider indispensable to the work of the Security Council. A proposal of this kind, of course, would require amending Article 23 of the Charter.

Mexico views the reform of the Security Council as a necessary element, but one that is part of a larger process — that is, United Nations reform. An effective collective security system necessarily involves the strengthening of multilateralism and of the United Nations.

That is why Mexico believes that the reform of the Security Council should not be centred exclusively on increasing the number of its members. Resolving this issue, as important as it is, will not in itself help to tackle the great challenges and dilemmas faced by the Organization. No institution exists that can improve its performance and fulfil its mandate through a simple increase in its membership.

It is a fact that, for more than a decade, States have focused all their attention on the arguments regarding the Council's lack of representativity in its current composition, to such a point that it is believed that the collective security system will automatically be strengthened by an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council. Mexico is more convinced than ever that such a hypothesis is baseless.

We are faced with a paradox. Expanding the Security Council has the purpose of increasing its legitimacy and making it more representative and inclusive, so that an ever larger number of countries may participate and cooperate in the work of maintaining peace and security. But allocating seats to a limited number of new permanent members would result in decision-making being concentrated in fewer countries, not more. Such a concentration of power would become even greater if the new permanent members have veto power, which would obstruct decision-making gradually and diminish effective contribution by all Member States in the work of the Organization. We therefore agree with the thesis joint proposal by Australia, Canada and New Zealand that reform should contemplate an increase in non-permanent members so that opportunities may be expanded and not reduced.

In Mexico's view, the logical order of the discussion has been inverted. The recent tendency has been to first discuss the size and composition of the Council, postponing until later a discussion of the mechanisms and functions that the Council needs in order to effectively fulfil its mandate to preserve international peace and security. Any exercise aimed at reviewing the composition of the Security Council must first identify the substantive institutional changes

demanded by the emergence of new threats, if we want a collective security system that can meet current challenges.

It is clear that the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council have arrived at a point of saturation. Mexico believes that a new methodology should be designed to redirect the debate.

That is why, in his statement to the General Assembly at its 10th plenary meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico proposed the convening of a General Conference, under Article 109 of the Charter, in order to tackle each and every issue of the comprehensive reform of the Organization and to reach general agreement, as established by General Assembly resolution 53/30. Mexico will present, in the group of friends established for this purpose, proposals that are adequately far-reaching. The danger and global reach of these new threats constitute a powerful incentive to start this second major stage in the history of the United Nations.

Through a General Conference, Member States will have the opportunity to propose the changes and additions the United Nations needs in order to offer dynamic and effective responses to the great challenges to peace and development. In that way, the international community will be able to adopt formulas and mechanisms that are clearly relevant to fulfilling the objectives that we share in this Organization.

As a catalyst for these discussions, Mexico hopes that the elements to be set out in the forthcoming report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will be especially helpful, considering the high qualifications and experience of its members as well as the Panel's independent nature. Through this discussion, we will be in a position to reform the Security Council with the assurance that we have not been mistaken or, even worse, headed in the wrong direction.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the manner in which you are guiding this debate. My delegation also thanks Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for the current month, for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

Having studied the report of the Security Council, my delegation would like to offer the following observations. This agenda item on the report of the Security Council represents a valuable opportunity to consider in depth the work of the Council and to identify steps that should be taken to improve the working methods of that important organ.

Regarding the format of the report, my delegation welcomes the fact that this is a shorter document, containing an analytical introduction and a statistical section. However, efforts must continue to further improve the quality of the report of the Security Council. It still seems to be a compilation of decisions and resolutions that have been adopted, along with a rather factual account of the work of the body.

Regarding the working methods of the Council, I am pleased to see that during the reporting period, the Security Council held a large number of public meetings, in which many States participated. We welcome the increase in the number of public information meetings organized by the Secretariat. They provide non-members of the Council with an opportunity to be better informed on how certain matters before the Security Council are developing.

However, there is still much to be done to make the workings of the Council even more transparent for us as Member States. We remain concerned by the fact that members of the Council, particularly permanent members, are still able to unilaterally decide whether or not to organize public meetings, even when such meetings are requested by a country or a group of countries. Certain States calling into question the right of a country to participate in a public meeting on an item of great concern to it is not likely to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council.

Turning to the substance of the report of the Security Council, we see that the Council has not only responded to threats to international and regional peace and security, but has also dealt directly, firmly and with determination with a number of conflicts in Africa, inter alia by sending Council missions to the field. However, on the matter of the Middle East, the Council's efforts have not lived up to expectations. Frustration over the repeated inability of the Council to become more involved in a settlement of the question

of Palestine is a serious threat to the region and to the authority of the Security Council.

On another matter, the repeated but selective use of Chapter VII of the Charter is becoming rather confusing. There is a danger that this might discredit Chapter VII and, indeed, other chapters dealing with the maintenance of peace and security.

Regarding agenda item 53, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, Mr. President, I would first of all like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and to his two Co-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for their outstanding contribution to our consideration of the item under discussion today. The crucial importance of reforming the Security Council has been reiterated annually since the Open-ended Working Group was established to deal with this matter in all its aspects in 1993. We are certainly well aware of the delicate and complex nature of this task, but we feel that we must achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council as soon as possible and that we must work even more intensively to that end.

There are new challenges in the world today, and so we must work together, within the United Nations, which is, after all, still the best framework for bringing together all of our efforts to ensure peace and security. It is also the source of international legality to which all States, without exception, must commit themselves. Faced with these challenges, the Security Council must immediately win back the trust of States and of world public opinion, not only by showing that it is able to effectively tackle the most difficult issues, but by becoming more widely representative of the international community as a whole and of the geopolitical realities of the world today.

The rich and varied proposals presented to us up until now contain the elements we need to act on those issues. However, since 1993, the Open-ended Working Group addressing that issue has not been able to draft a specific formula that is universally accepted.

Despite the initiative of President Hunte during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly to launch a lively discussion on six major themes relating to the general reform of the Security Council, the report before us is still only a simple compilation of ideas and proposals such as we have been receiving for many years.

That does not mean we do not recognize the progress that has been made in some aspects of Council reform. Indeed, the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group have enabled us, during those years, to identify a number of elements that are widely supported by the majority of States.

It is thus clear that we have certain elements that could be used as the foundation for a solution that is acceptable to all Member States. It is also clear that what is lacking is not ideas or proposals, but the necessary political will to accomplish the undertaking, as well as a specific commitment towards that end.

We are confident that you, Sir, will do your utmost to ensure that we move forward on the path before us.

Tunisia has participated in all sessions of the Working Group since its inception, and we continue to stand by our position, which we have often stated. My country believes the goal of the reform is to strengthen democratic and fair representation within the Council and to enhance its credibility and effectiveness.

The Council must reflect the political and economic realities of the world today. It must have the necessary democratic legitimacy to act on behalf of the international community in discharging its mandate under the Charter.

Its objectives can not be reached, unless there is an increase in both categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent. Equally important, the size of a restructured Council must allow for a genuine democratic representation of the developing countries.

In that context, Tunisia still supports the position of Africa, which has remained unchanged to this day and which is reflected clearly and unambiguously in the Harare Declaration of 4 June 1997 — adopted by the thirty-third Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity. The Declaration states that the number of members of the Council should be increased in both categories and that the African continent should be allocated two permanent seats. Those seats would be allocated by a decision of Africans themselves, in accordance with a system of rotation based on the current criteria of the African Union and subsequent elements that might improve upon those criteria. Africa will prove able, as

it always has been, to reach agreement on the allocation of seats allocated to it and will do so without undue haste.

The new permanent members must have the same privileges and powers as the current permanent members. The permanent members would be proposed by their respective regions and would be elected by the General Assembly.

Concerning the power of veto, my delegation endorses the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that the veto should be limited to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. It goes without saying that a positive and constructive attitude concerning the question, on the part of the permanent members of the Council, would be crucial.

Lastly, the question of periodic review of the reformed Security Council is an indispensable element in the reform programme and must be taken seriously. The review would be envisaged as a confidence-building measure and would permit us to make any necessary adjustments in future. But even more importantly, it would be the mechanism whereby we would be able to evaluate the contribution of new members towards enhancing the effectiveness of the Council.

In conclusion, my delegation will continue to strongly support any proposal realistically dedicated to the representativeness, transparency or democratization of the Security Council. We trust the current debate in the Assembly on this important item will provide a meaningful contribution to the substantive debate that we will have, following publication of the report of the High-level Panel.

Mr. Ahamed (India): We welcome the opportunity to participate in the joint debate under agenda item 11: Report of the Security Council, and agenda item 53: Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I join other speakers before me in thanking Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the report of the Council for the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004, to the General Assembly.

In the recent past, the Security Council has witnessed a substantial increase in the range of issues brought before it for its consideration. The end of the cold war and the advent of the twenty-first century have brought to the fore new threats and challenges to international peace and security. Some of the threats, represented by an increasing number of inter and intra-State conflicts, have evoked standard responses in the form of measures aimed at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building, transitional justice and post-conflict national reconciliation.

Others are less direct and, in their ambiguity, pose a greater danger to the international order. Those include international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into the hands of non-State actors, international crime and narcotics. Those issues require a very different response, the mechanics of which we are still working out.

The Council has had to act decisively to deal with the new threats. They have placed enormous burdens on the existing system of collective security, sometimes straining it to the breaking point. The ability of the Council to act effectively and responsibly in the future will provide an important reassurance for the international community that its concerns in the area of security are being adequately addressed.

That calls not only for greater political will and unity on issues, but for the perception that the decisions taken by the Council largely reflect the concerns and aspirations of the general membership. A greater democratization of the existing order, increased transparency of its actions and the co-option of different ideas, interests and sensitivities will be essential in order for the endeavour to succeed over time.

Of late, the Security Council has increasingly appropriated legislative and treaty-making powers, as reflected in many of its decisions. Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004) were exceptional. But such actions should remain exceptions and not develop into norms. By increasingly resorting to resolutions and enforcement actions under Chapter VII of the Charter, even on matters that are better resolved through multilateral cooperation, the efforts of the Council can often become counter-productive. The Council can best succeed in implementing of its actions only when its decisions are taken through a process of consultations with the wider Membership.

My delegation views with concern the tendency of the Council to adopt decisions on issues that affect

the wider Membership of the United Nations without taking into account the views of the States concerned. We call upon the Council to ensure that it provides adequate opportunity for the views of the wider Membership to be heard on important issues, through transparent mechanisms such as open debates, before decisions on such issues are taken.

A majority of delegations have expressed concern over the lack of transparency in the work of the Council during the debate under this item at the last session of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, however, the Council appears to have paid very little attention to those concerns. We had specifically recommended that the Council, in the interest of democratizating its work, eliminate the selectivity currently applied with respect to participation under rule 37 of the Council's rules of procedure. Yet, in a recent instance, only one representative of a certain group of nations was permitted to express his views on an issue that, in our view, affected all States.

We have also spoken against the distinct lack of transparency in scheduling open and public meetings of the Council. With the exception of unforeseen developments, the Council has little reason not to disclose its full intentions for public and open events in its calendar, which is released at the beginning of every month. This inexplicable lack of transparency can only give rise to misgivings on the part of the wider membership and perpetuate an impression of the Council acting as an entity separate from the wider membership in both representation and intention.

Moreover, we have drawn attention in the past to the increased number of thematic debates in the Council on issues that very often fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. We have recommended that such instances be restricted in the interests of a more efficient use of the Council's time in dealing with the pressing issues and to ensure a more productive outcome when such thematic issues are of direct relevance to the Council's work. It is high time, in our view, that thematic debates be held in the General Assembly.

It is an inescapable conclusion that the Security Council will be truly effective and respected for its decisions only if it represents, and is seen to represent, the interests of the larger membership. A perusal of the items on the Council's agenda will reveal that the majority of issues under its consideration pertain to the developing world. Yet, developing countries account for less than half of the Council's membership during the best of times. This discrepancy becomes far more acute when the composition of the permanent membership is examined in isolation.

There is universal recognition of the critical need to undertake a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system in order to forge a stronger and more effective multilateralism. This reform cannot be limited or unidirectional, but must be inclusive and all-encompassing. It should include such elements as the revitalization of the General Assembly, strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, reform of the Secretariat machinery, reform of the planning and budgetary process and, above all, an expansion of the Security Council and reform of its working methods and decision-making processes. This would also make it possible to restore responsibility for the economic agenda of the United Nations, apart from questions of effectiveness and authority, to the General Assembly.

The Security Council, as currently configured, is not representative of contemporary realities. The Prime Minister of India touched upon this imbalance when he stated in his address to the Assembly on 23 September that "An overwhelming majority of the world's population cannot be excluded from an institution that today legislates on an increasing number of issues, with an ever-widening impact" (*A/59/PV.7*). There has been a four-fold increase in the membership of the United Nations since its inception in 1945, including a sharp increase in the number of developing countries. Though the provisions of the Charter give the General Assembly great authority and primacy, these have been eroded steadily over the past decade.

The permanent membership of the Security Council must have the critical mass to respond to the aspirations for democracy of Member States and to act accordingly. In other words, without the inclusion and presence of developing countries in an expanded Security Council, all other reform elements aimed at restoring the authority of the General Assembly would be in vain.

The fact that the vast majority of the general membership of the United Nations finds no representation in the permanent member category, and is inadequately represented in the non-permanent category, is an anomaly that needs to be urgently

rectified if the Council's decisions and actions are to be viewed as representative and legitimate. Additionally, new players from the developed world have emerged, and it is important that they find their place in a restructured Security Council.

It is imperative, therefore, that the Security Council be comprehensively reformed, including an expansion of its membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and the inclusion of both developing and developed countries as new permanent members. Any attempt to limit expansion solely to the non-permanent category would be to fail to establish the necessary representativeness within the Council. Nor would the creation of new quasi-permanent seats bring about equitable representation or enhance the Council's legitimacy, effectiveness or representativeness. Such partial and piecemeal attempts would only serve to preserve the present structure of the Council and would, in effect, erode its credibility even further. Instead of correcting, they would exacerbate current shortcomings in the Council's structure and work.

For its part, India has expressed its readiness to assume its responsibility as a global player in an expanded Security Council. We will work together with Brazil, Germany, Japan and a candidate from Africa in our quest to make the Security Council more representative, legitimate and effective.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Security Council is a body of the utmost importance which bears major responsibility for maintaining international peace and security — even more than the General Assembly.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the view that the deliberation of the current agenda items is an important occasion for the Security Council to review its annual work for international peace and security and to draw an appropriate lesson before the General Assembly, representing all United Nations Member States.

In that context, my delegation would like to present some views regarding the report of the Security Council, as well as the issue of the reform of the Security Council, before the current session.

First, it is important for the Security Council to take measures to eliminate the unilateralism pursued by the super-Power if it wishes to fulfil its mission for the maintenance of international peace and security, in line with the United Nations Charter. Unilateralism ruthlessly tramples down the most universal common interests of the international community, as it is a dangerous doctrine pursued by the super-Power to seek the establishment of a polar world order to subordinate all countries to its own interests.

For about a decade now, the Security Council has been deeply engaged in the question of Iraq, imposing inspections upon that country under the pretext of preventing the development of weapons of mass destruction on behalf of the interests of the super-Power. Yet, it failed to prevent the unilateral aggression against Iraq. Member States should draw a due lesson therefrom.

Secondly, the principle of impartiality should be observed in all activities of the Security Council. The Security Council should not become an organ dealing only with questions related to small and vulnerable countries and resorting to sanctions and the use of armed forces. Instead, the Security Council should make an issue of any country accountable for a breach of the peace, be it the super-Power or a country under the protection of the super-Power, and take relevant steps to assume with fairness its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Only when equity is ensured in the activities of the Security Council can it resolve disputes smoothly, make a substantial contribution to international peace and security and thus earn its credibility in the eyes of the international community.

Over 10 years have passed since the General Assembly began its deliberations on the question of Security Council reform. However, the prospects for Security Council reform are still gloomy, and that disheartens the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Even a basic convergence on the simultaneous enlargement of the permanent and non-permanent membership has not been reached regarding the expansion of Security Council membership, which constitutes a core of Security Council reform. Though certain measures have been taken in terms of the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, substantial measures — such as that allowing the parties to conflicts to attend the relevant informal consultations — have not yet been taken.

That is due not to the lack of sufficient consultations or reasonable proposals, but to the fact that there are some Member States that do not have the political will to ensure the fair solution of the question of Security Council reform. Reality requires each Member country to take the position of putting aside its interests and giving priority to the common interests of the Member States in the deliberations on Security Council reform.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should like to see the General Assembly take steps at this session to make substantial progress towards the consideration of Security Council reform in 2005, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, after making a critical and objective analysis of the present situation.

In that regard, we deem it necessary that all Member States gear their deliberations on Security Council reform towards ensuring the fully equitable nature of the Security Council in the resolution of international disputes. The reform of the Security Council should not be undertaken just for show by simply increasing its membership or making some adjustments to its working methods. Instead, the reform should be a substantial one.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea believes that measures to eliminate egocentric unilateralism — which uses the Security Council whenever necessary and rejects it relentlessly when there is no such necessity — should constitute the core of reform.

As regards the enlargement of the composition of the Security Council, priority should be attached to ensuring the full representation of the developing countries in the expansion of the permanent and the non-permanent membership alike. It is essential for the democratization of the United Nations and the fair resolution of disputes that we ensure the full representation of the developing countries, which constitute the majority of the United Nations membership.

Given the gloomy prospects for reaching any agreement on the enlargement of the permanent membership, my delegation deems it realistic to increase, for the time being, the non-permanent membership. In so doing, we will serve the very purpose of reform by correcting the current imbalance in the composition of the Security Council and giving all Member States an equal opportunity to participate in the activities of the Security Council.

Unlike the enlargement of the non-permanent membership, the enlargement of the permanent membership requires greater perseverance on the part of the Member States, as it involves such sensitive and complicated issues as the criteria for new permanent members, the extension of the veto power and so on. That being so, one should not attempt to delay the progress of overall Security Council reform on the basis of the very issue of the enlargement of the permanent membership. Any attempt to do so is intended to counter genuine reform.

Finally, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to reiterate its stand that the reform of the Security Council should be undertaken on the basis of ensuring the full representation of Member States in favour of the developing countries, and expresses its expectation that practical steps will be taken towards that end.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council for this month, for submitting the report of the Security Council covering the period from August 2003 to July 2004.

I should like to reiterate on this occasion that the General Assembly's consideration of the Security Council's report reaffirms the Assembly's vital role in the consideration of all issues under the Charter and provides an opportunity for Member States to express their views on the work of the Security Council in fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. For Syria, the report in part reflects the efforts that we made during our membership in the Council up until the end of last year.

Undoubtedly, over the reporting period the Security Council employed strenuous efforts in dealing with the issues before it. It gave priority to regaining stability in conflict areas around the world. Perhaps more than anything else, African issues enjoyed greater attention by the Council, which we are pleased to note.

The Council also increased the number of its open meetings to achieve greater transparency in its

work and to give other Member States the opportunity to express their views on the issues before it.

In that regard, it is regrettable that the Security Council has not been able to respond to the serious questions raised by the events and circumstances we witnessed over the reporting period and that have a bearing on its role and its effectiveness. Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian territories demonstrate the Council's inability at times to maintain international peace and security or to put an end to Israeli policies of aggression in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have been escalating owing to the impunity Israel enjoys within the Council.

Another matter of great concern is the Council's deviation from the principles of objectivity and its resort to double standards that could undermine its role, as well as the international legitimacy of the system we respect. At a time when the Council has failed to adopt important resolutions on issues that threaten international peace and security because such resolutions were needlessly vetoed, the Security Council has taken decisions that were surprising to many not only because they did not lie within its sphere of competence, but also because they represented interference in the internal affairs of a Member State, in contravention of the Charter. Such actions create an extremely dangerous precedent and raise serious questions as to the role and effectiveness of the Council. Arabs everywhere, their media and their intellectuals, seriously question the Security Council's ability to face up to the challenges and responsibilities before it. It is even more worrying as the Council tends to legislate on many issues in a manner that both contradicts its responsibilities and that interferes with the work of the General Assembly.

Syria's continued support of the United Nations and its agencies is well known, as is its call for United Nations resolutions to be implemented. However, that does not mean that we will not criticize mistakes when they are made and, particularly, when double standards are applied in dealing with United Nations resolutions, or when adopted resolutions go beyond its sphere of competence and responsibility. I believe that this lies at the heart of the issue of reform, which we are considering at present, in order to prevent the Organization from becoming a tool in the hands of greater Powers at the expense of the interests of lesser ones.

The main objective of reform of the United Nations is to promote its ability to face up to the new challenges and threats confronting it. Reform must take as its fundamental basis a total commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

We eagerly await the results of the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General, which has been tasked with considering current and future threats to international peace and security as well as the situation of the principal organs of the United Nations and the introduction of proposals on enhancing their role. We look forward to participating in the discussions among Member States on the Panel's opinions and recommendations.

Reforming the Security Council and expanding its membership should be part and parcel of a joint, integrated project that takes into account equitable geographical representation and establishes transparency, accountability and democracy in the Council's working methods, including in the decision-making process. Expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories should also take into account the importance of equitable representation for developing countries and should not marginalize them in that process. Furthermore, it should also be in line with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement; it should be comprehensive and move away from divisiveness, and should reflect the role and viewpoints of regional groups. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm the position that the Arab Group has been reiterating for some time: the importance in any future reform of the Security Council of allocating a permanent seat and two non-permanent seats to Arab countries, which would be filled on a rotating basis, in accordance with the standards used in the Arab League. In that context, we would like to note that the current rotation period of the one non-permanent seat on the Council for the Arab countries is 30 years, which is unjust and unacceptable by any standards.

We look forward to the coming meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and we hope that the entire United Nations membership will be enthusiastic and responsible in undertaking reform of this Organization, which is the basis of international

democratic action to realize the aspirations of our peoples to security and stability.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): My delegation welcomes the annual report of the Security Council (A/59/2). I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his clear and capable introduction of the report.

The document before us encompasses a wide range of issues dealt with by the Security Council during the reporting period. It has been prepared by the Secretariat in line with the revised format agreed upon by the Security Council in 2002 and contains an analytical summary of the work of the Council.

The Security Council maintained a busy agenda on Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as other important issues. Iraq remained a focus of the Council's attention during the period covered by the report. We commend Security Council efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations in assisting the people of Iraq to rebuild their country and create a stable and secure environment.

The situation in Afghanistan was another important item on the Council's agenda. The elections held on 9 October 2004 have become another landmark on the way to democracy and stability in Afghanistan. We continue to believe that the success of the political process in Afghanistan depends on the United Nations preserving its coordinating role in the settlement of the situation in that country.

Kazakhstan endorses the Security Council's continuing efforts to address ongoing conflicts. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations constitute one of the main elements in the maintenance of international peace and security. They are one of the key instruments available to the Security Council in the settlement of conflicts and disputes.

We take positive note of the fact that the Security Council has shifted its debate from the issues of peace and security to a much broader concept of security, attaching special importance to the questions of human rights, the rule of law, the role of the regional organizations, civil society, economic and social factors and HIV/AIDS.

We welcome the fact that in recent years the Security Council has taken measures to ensure its openness to non-members. Open thematic debates and interactive briefings are now held more frequently. That is a positive development in the work of the Council and we must encourage its efforts to take further steps in that direction.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly spoken about the need to address the issue of the Security Council's composition in order to ensure that its decisions command greater respect. The report of the Open-ended Working Group, which is under consideration today, states that, despite a limited success in the area of methods of work, significant progress has not been made on Security Council reform. It is noted that the impasse hindering the reform stems from the complex nature of the issue.

Kazakhstan has previously stated its position on that crucial subject. We share the perception of the urgency of a changed Security Council, which needs to be more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient. Kazakhstan holds the view that, in its current form, the Security Council no longer reflects the realities of our world. We believe that equitable representation of the Member States in the Security Council could strengthen its ability to effectively face the challenges of the twenty-first century and to play its role in the settlement of crisis situations.

The Council should be revitalized by the addition of new permanent and non-permanent members. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States. Asia, Africa and Latin America should have a wider representation in the Security Council and should be directly involved in the search for solutions to the important problems facing the international community.

We believe that it is also necessary to increase the number of non-permanent members, taking due account of the interests of the Asian region. We also share the view that the "enemy State" clauses in the United Nations Charter are obsolete.

On the question of the reform of the Council, we look forward to the discussion, in a constructive manner, of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group has to proceed with its work, taking into account the progress achieved at previous sessions of the General Assembly. We must

continue to make every effort to reach a comprehensive agreement encompassing all aspects of Security Council reform. My delegation is of the view that the work on cluster I and cluster II issues would have to continue in the Open-ended Working Group during this session.

We take this opportunity to thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, for his efforts to steer the work of the Group at the last session. We appreciate his initiative to stimulate an active discussion on substantive themes relating to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We look forward to working closely with the Security Council and to participating actively in all its efforts to meet the global need for peace.

Ms. Novotná (Slovakia): Allow me to convey my delegation's appreciation to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council, for his comprehensive introduction of the Council's report to the General Assembly. I also thank the members of the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing the report.

We are pleased to note that this year's annual report follows the new approach initiated in 2002, aimed at improving the report in both format and substance. My delegation welcomes the joint debate on the report of the Security Council and on the question of representation on the Council, which allows us to use our time more efficiently and effectively.

The comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining international peace and security, is vital to our Organization's success at a time when global challenges and problems require strong and truly international management. At this year's general debate, many world leaders addressed the reform of the Security Council. Their views were mostly focused on the Council's membership expansion.

Security Council reform is also one of the issues being considered by the High-level Panel established by Secretary-General Kofi Annan last year. The report of the Panel will be available before the end of this year and we sincerely hope that it will present meaningful suggestions for a long-term Security Council overhaul that will benefit the entire United Nations and the international community.

It is clear that the Security Council must become more democratic, more consistent, more effective and more open. It must function less as a geopolitical instrument of major Powers and more as a transparent and legitimate organ accountable to the wider membership of the United Nations.

There is near-universal agreement that the Security Council should be enlarged in order to become more diverse and more representative of various regions and countries of different sizes. Increased membership would enhance the Council's capacity to be a credible source of international peace, security and justice. That would lead to more active support for its decisions, as well as greater participation in operations arising from its decisions. Ultimately, it could encourage responsible leadership from countries of the world's more volatile regions.

Slovakia supports the idea that the Council could well be expanded in due course to the maximum number of 25, with a more equitable geographical and regional distribution, without limiting its effectiveness and efficiency. Like several other Member States, Slovakia believes that the Security Council should be enlarged in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Such an approach would ensure the Council's dynamic adaptation to the evolving international realities that have arisen since 1945, when the United Nations mandate was drawn up.

The present membership structure is clearly unbalanced and does not truly reflect the membership of the United Nations. The four fifths of humankind that live in the developing countries have only one vote among the permanent members. It seems only appropriate that the enlargement in the permanent category should include countries of the global South.

Only such an expansion could rectify the existing imbalance in the composition of the Council. We duly note that several developing and industrialized countries that possess political and economic potential have staked a claim to permanent membership. Slovakia maintains the position that an enlarged Security Council should also include Germany and Japan as new permanent members.

Since 1990, the Security Council has become a more effective engine for mobilizing the world community to repel aggression, manage conflicts and

maintain international peace and security. The Council has dramatically increased its activities with regard to both peacekeeping missions and the adoption of coercive measures. It has branched into many new areas far beyond the traditional definitions of peace and security.

In addition to changing the composition of the Security Council, we must enhance its working methods. Some progress has already been made towards making the work of the Security Council more transparent. A number of decisions have been taken by the Council itself with regard to the reform of its procedures in an effort to increase and promote the transparency of the Council's deliberative process and its accountability to the wider membership. Other proposals and initiatives have been introduced to increase efficiency.

For example, direct meetings are now being held between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, allowing the latter to convey their opinions directly to the Council and contribute to the creation and the mandates of peacekeeping operations. In addition, the improved quality of the Council's reporting and the holding of more frequent open meetings and debates should also be mentioned.

It is widely accepted that the cooperative relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be further promoted in the discharge of the function of the maintenance of international peace and security. Their mandates, as spelled out in the Charter, establish the constitutional balance between the two main United Nations bodies. In this respect, we welcome the adoption of resolution 58/126, which provides for an expanded coordination mechanism between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I should like briefly to touch upon the question of the veto. Many Member States view the veto privilege as an anachronism that is responsible for much of the Security Council's undemocratic and ineffective procedure. Slovakia shares the view that the right of veto should no longer be the prerogative of a few States. It is, however, unrealistic to assume that the veto power will change precipitously. The shift away from veto prerogatives, which are limited to a number of great Powers, should occur gradually but systematically.

The reform of the United Nations is not an easy process. The core of the reform remains, without doubt, the reform of its most powerful organ, which enjoys unique authority under the Charter and international law. Despite the major obstacles to be overcome, we should not relent in our efforts to achieve meaningful reform of the Security Council, so that it can continue to play an effective role as the focal point for the resolution of the conflicts of our time.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): At the outset, my delegation would like to express our appreciation to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report of the Security Council this morning. We also appreciate the work and efforts of the Secretariat in compiling the report, contained in document A/59/2. The report does, indeed, provide a comprehensive picture of the work undertaken by the Security Council during the previous session.

My delegation also welcomes the organization of open consultations and briefings for all Member States, and we look forward to the future organization of such meetings, which play an important role in imparting information to and promoting a better understanding of the work of the Security Council among all States members of the General Assembly. My delegation believes that such open consultations allow an opportunity for States that are not members of the Security Council to contribute to the decision-making process so that the Security Council can make more responsive and relevant decisions. To this end, such dialogues and consultations, as well as the distribution of the Security Council's programme of work, are very much encouraged.

Last week, my delegation had the pleasure of addressing the Assembly under agenda items 52 and 54, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly" and "Strengthening of the United Nations system", respectively. Today, my delegation is pleased to address agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". My delegation believes that the reform of the United Nations must be undertaken in a holistic manner. Having already spoken about the reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly, therefore, the next logical step is to share my delegation's views on the reform of the Security Council.

We must face the fact that there are many changes taking place in the world — changes that need a more responsive and democratic mechanism if they are to be properly addressed at both the national and the international levels. My delegation is of the view that a reformed Security Council with more equitable geographical representation and an expanded membership is, indeed, required if the Council is to respond effectively and efficiently to the new changes that we are talking about.

To this end, my delegation welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, contained in document A/58/47, which recommends that discussions on the topic be continued at the current session of the General Assembly. My delegation would also like to congratulate Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, for his dedication and his tireless efforts in reviving and sustaining the momentum of the reform of the Security Council, thereby providing a foundation for our deliberations today and during the rest of the session. My delegation pledges its full support and active participation in the reform process of the Organization, including the Security Council.

The convening by the Working Group of three formal meetings, as well as of nine rounds of informal consultations, is, indeed, an impressive record. However, the number of consultation sessions held is not as important as the progress that has been made. My delegation welcomes the move away from consideration of the two clusters to consideration of five pertinent topics, namely, the size of an enlarged Security Council, the question of regional representation, the criteria for membership, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and accountability.

My delegation also welcomes additional discussion on the use of the veto and looks forward to participating in the consideration of any other issues that might be relevant to the reform of the Security Council, such as the meetings of the Council with troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat; the measures to ensure further transparency of the Council; the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly; and the proper scope of the role of the Council in setting international legal norms. Such an approach has thus far provided us with stimulating discussions, as well as encouraging results.

In principle, my delegation is of the opinion that the current world climate warrants an expansion of the Security Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, given that the United Nations membership has expanded almost fourfold since the Organization's inception in 1945. However, the expansion of the Council should also take into account issues of manageability and efficiency. The 191 Members of the Organization need greater representation in the Security Council. But such representation needs to be equitably distributed in the geographical allocations of Member States, including both developed and developing countries, so as to reflect the world in microcosm.

In the light of the existing diversified opinions on how the membership of the Security Council should be expanded, my delegation wishes to echo the statement made by the Thai Foreign Minister during the general debate two weeks ago, calling for priority to be given to the establishment of a set of relevant criteria for membership before considering the admission thereto by names or number. In other words, before membership is granted, new members of the Security Council must fulfil a certain established set of criteria — for example, the ability and the commitment to discharge their responsibilities in safeguarding international peace and security and in upholding the Council's significant authority, which must be exercised with the utmost care and responsibility. Given that the primary role of the Security Council is to safeguard global peace and security, the ability to perform that function to any degree — for example, by contributing troops and financial resources for peace operations — could become an essential factor.

In this era of United Nations reform, the Security Council must connect more significantly with the rest of the United Nations. Therefore, greater interaction, coordination and coherence between and among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be achieved. Regular meetings between the Presidents of those organs could provide a good starting point.

Moreover, such meetings should also provide opportunities to address in a unified manner a wider range of issues, such as post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction and development, the latter of

which is seen as the best means of conflict prevention and thus is unquestionably relevant to issues related to world peace and security. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly on budgetary questions should be re-examined and further strengthened, as the decisions taken by the Council may impose budgetary obligations on and thus financially affect all members of the Assembly.

At any rate, the expansion of the Security Council must not be executed at the expense of transparency and accountability. The Council should both represent and be responsive to the views and the will of the international community. Decision-making processes should also be made transparent.

Finally, my delegation would like to touch upon the issue of the veto power. As shown in annex III of the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/58/47), since the inception of the Security Council, more than 200 of its decisions have been vetoed, mostly by the single negative vote of a permanent member. That practice should be reconsidered in the light of the proposed expansion of the membership of the Council. In that context, a new approach aimed at bringing more credibility and legitimacy to the use of the veto power may need to be introduced.

The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will soon be completed. My delegation looks forward to its guidance and its suggestions for further reform of the United Nations system. However, the report should not delay Member States in formulating ideas and innovative ways to improve the Security Council. Additionally, as the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations is fast approaching, a revitalized, reformed and responsive Security Council, as well as the United Nations as a whole, could herald a welcoming beginning for the seventh decade of this body.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly is a useful instrument. However, we must continue the efforts aimed at making it more analytical.

This report gives us the opportunity to take a look at the progress of the work of the Security Council and its relations with the General Assembly. In fact, the Council's increasing role in new areas, the increase in thematic debates and the legislative trend we have noted recently are all developments that raise, in new terms, the question of the Security Council's interaction with the General Assembly and with the Economic and Social Council. That question deserves genuine reflection. We hope that the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General will enable us to take a step back and devote ourselves to such reflection.

I now turn to the question of reform of the Security Council. For many years, we have reiterated that the Council's current composition no longer corresponds to today's geopolitical realities. We cannot continue to ignore that evidence; the very credibility and legitimacy of the Council are at stake. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on this question is at an impasse.

In addition, my delegation awaits with great interest the proposals to be made by the High-level Panel on this subject. In fact, the Panel, by approaching the question of Council reform in a broader context, should shed appropriate and new light on this debate. We will therefore examine these proposals — together with the recommendations that the Secretary-General wishes to make on the basis of the Panel's report — attentively and in an open and constructive spirit.

Belgium favours balanced and realistic reform that would respond to the wishes of a vast majority of Member States — reform that would strengthen the representativity and thus the legitimacy of the Security Council, but without compromising its effectiveness. Together with a group of countries that agree on such an approach, my delegation has in the past introduced pragmatic proposals aimed at expanding the two categories of Council membership. We have also formulated proposals aimed at limiting the exercise of the right of the veto. We remain convinced that those are the parameters necessary to arrive at a compromise solution.

In fact, we believe it essential that States that are actors on the international scene and have the necessary diplomatic, financial and military capacity to support actions undertaken by the Security Council should be able to participate in that forum. Moreover, Belgium has always advocated expansion that would respect regional balances. In that respect, we believe we should consider the issue of greater involvement by regional organizations, directly or indirectly, in the work of the Council. In particular, the dynamic of

European construction towards a truly common foreign policy should prompt us to think about European Union representation within the Security Council.

Precisely because geopolitical realities are constantly changing, we also feel that it would be appropriate to provide for the periodic review of the Council's composition — every 10 to 15 years, for example.

I can assure you, Mr. President, that my delegation will continue to participate actively in the discussions and the work on reform of the Security Council in the same constructive spirit that has inspired our previous proposals. You can count on our full support in that undertaking.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. We should like to thank the President of the Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, for his clear and comprehensive introduction of the report.

The report gives us an overall picture of the work the Council has done in the past year in discharging its mandate, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. This is a good opportunity for Member States to review and assess the Council's work and to present their observations on this matter.

My country also welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. This is an important opportunity for us, as Member States of the Organization, to give our views on this important matter.

The Security Council report is an important document, and it is of great interest to delegations, which eagerly await its publication every year. It gives a full account of measures taken by the Council over the past year. It also gives us important statistical information that serves as a reference for delegations, as well as for researchers and those who take an interest in the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly as a whole.

Although the report is comprehensive, it lacks ample explanation and analysis of the Council's work. It contains documents and resolutions that have been issued and that we have seen; what is needed is an evaluation of the successes and the failures of the Council, the impediments it has encountered, and proposals to improve its performance.

There is one thing that we have often said in the past, which is that the report comes out late every year. It comes out just a few days before it is discussed by the General Assembly, thus creating difficulties for us, as we have only a short time to study it.

The Council reports to the Assembly under Article 24 of the Charter, and it has to comply fully and faithfully with the provisions of this Article, as must the Secretariat. The Council is one of the Organization's principal organs, and all Members must be kept informed of its activities, as it acts on behalf of the membership and its decisions affect their interests and their obligations.

Accordingly, we all need to study the report, and with enough time, so that we can submit our views on it. We want to stress the importance of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This relationship is governed by many Charter articles. The relations between the two bodies have been considered in depth over the past decade during discussions on Council reform. Some agreed ideas and observations have emerged, such as how to enhance and improve the Council's annual report and other reports to the Assembly.

Regular monthly consultations have been held between the Presidents of the Council and the Assembly and the Secretary-General. Under General Assembly resolution 58/126, the Assembly reviewed the matter regarding the revitalization of the work of the Assembly and efforts to improve relations between these two organs. We want to stress how important it is to consolidate the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This means that the Council must have greater transparency in its work and in its working methods.

Many have noted that the Council is beginning to consider issues that do not fall within its purview but rather within that of the General Assembly. It has begun to broaden its mandate, mainly the maintenance of international peace and security, by taking up issues such as poverty, children, children and armed conflict, the rule of law and human rights. These are issues that fall within the mandate of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Some Members have

interpreted the transfer of issues from the Assembly to the Council as due to the latter's desire to broaden its activities and the Assembly's inability to deal effectively with such issues. The Assembly must be more active and effective and tackle these issues in a new spirit in order to restore the proper balance between the two organs, so that each can exercise its specific powers under the United Nations Charter.

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. My delegation appreciates what the Working Group has done. We also welcome the ideas and proposals it has offered. We welcome any progress in this area, slow as the progress may have been. Since its founding in 1993, the Working Group has dealt with a number of controversial issues, although it has not yet arrived at specific proposals on the reforms to be undertaken to improve the working methods of the Council, its composition and the number of its members. Nevertheless, the Working Group is the forum that every Member goes to in order to discuss ways that would lead to the required reform.

We trust that the Group's work will be crowned with success so that this and other issues can be resolved. The question of Security Council reform has become a fundamental prerequisite, as has improvement in its working methods and structure. This has been a priority and one of the most discussed issues within the United Nations and one of the major concerns of the membership. In the last few years, the Working Group's discussions have taken place within this context. There has been a significant increase in United Nations membership, and the question of the equitable representation of States in the Council has become a fundamental requirement. Account must be taken of this increase in United Nations membership when discussing the increase in the membership of the Council.

There are more items on the agenda as well, and special attention and redoubled efforts must be devoted to this problem. Equitable representation is needed in the Council, taking into account the interests of all Member States.

We welcome improvement in the working methods and increased transparency of the Council. We also welcome its greater number of open meetings, discussions and public briefings, which have enabled Member States to learn more about the Council's work and to follow its discussions. This improvement in its working methods should prompt us to exert further efforts in this area. We need the cooperation of one and all in order to reach our goal, which is to ensure that the Security Council represents the interests of all Member States and that all States requesting its assistance and protection can have recourse to it in its role as a defender of the law and a promoter of justice.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): I wish to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom for introducing the Security Council's report in his capacity as President of the Council.

The past year has again raised a wide range of issues that the Council is taking up in exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation continues to believe that this also represents a stark reminder of the need to adapt the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent composition and methods of work, including the right of veto, if it is to cope efficiently with the geopolitical realities of the world today. In advocating an increase in the non-permanent seats on the Council, let me reiterate that an additional non-permanent seat should be allocated to the Eastern-European region, alongside those to be allocated to the groups of African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean States.

Notwithstanding the continuing lack of progress within the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council on the issue of increased Council membership, we wish to commend the innovative efforts to foster progress in its discussions made by the previous President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, and both Vice-Chairpersons of the Working Group, Ambassador Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. The practice of focusing our discussions on separate points and of introducing the reference and historical-review papers was a useful one in terms of better structuring ongoing discussions over the past decade.

However, we cannot afford to spend another decade going through the same discussions. Last year,

Slovenia wholeheartedly welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and we anticipate with great interest the report of the Panel to be submitted to the Secretary-General later this year, as well as the recommendations to emanate from it. We expect the Panel and the consequent recommendations to address a range of issues to better enable the Organization, including the Security Council, to collectively address today's threats and challenges in a globalized world. We anticipate the issue of Security Council enlargement to represent part of the recommendations. At the same time, that issue alone should not overshadow other issues of importance to enabling the strengthened Organization to respond effectively to crisis situations and crisis issues, thereby strengthening effective multilateralism and the international order based on international law. Slovenia will engage constructively in addressing all recommendations emanating from the work of the Panel.

Let me also take this opportunity to express the view of my delegation that greater opportunities need to be provided to the general United Nations membership to participate in the Council's deliberations, particularly when those result in its "semi-legislative" decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter, binding on all United Nations Members. Greater openness to general views in such decision-making processes will increase the legitimacy of the Council. Having said that, we continue to believe that treaty-making continues to be the principal source of obligations binding on States.

The complexity of threats to world peace, security and the well-being of the populations of various regions of the globe demands a strengthening of the cooperation between various regional organizations and the United Nations. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides a framework for such cooperation that could be further exploited. On that issue, I wish to concur with the statement made by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa this morning. Slovenia welcomes the trend demonstrated over the past year towards an intensification of partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. Next year, Slovenia will assume the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and, in that capacity, will strive to further enhance cooperation between the United Nations, its Security Council and the OSCE, as well as other regional organizations, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry for his eloquent introduction of the report of the Security Council. My delegation also commends the excellent work of the Secretariat in compiling that invaluable source of reference and information. That presentation is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly on the discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. Our dialogue will enhance the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter.

An adequate flow of information towards non-members is a necessary prerequisite to assessing how the Council is dealing with political issues. It should therefore be strengthened. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make available via their homepages have been further improved. The increase in public meetings underlines the willingness of the Council to take into account the views of Member States.

Austria, as a traditional provider of peacekeeping troops, would welcome further efforts of the Council to enhance the dialogue with troop-contributing countries. Cooperation between the Council and the troop-contributing countries at an early stage is essential when new mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions are being considered.

My Government warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's pledge to make the strengthening of the rule of law a priority for the remainder of his tenure. In that respect, and in view of the unique role and responsibility of the Security Council, the Austrian Foreign Minister launched a dialogue on the role and functions of the Security Council in the strengthening of an international system based on the rule of law. As a first step, Austria will convene a panel on the question "The Security Council as world legislator?" on 4 November, during this year's International Law Week at the United Nations in New York. The panel, which is being organized in cooperation with New York University, is designed to enhance the dialogue between theory and practice on that important topic.

The United Nations has played a central role in Austria's foreign policy ever since my country became a Member in 1955. We therefore attach great value to

the legitimacy and efficient functioning of the Organization and support a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Austria, like the vast majority of Member States, is concerned about the growing gap between the Council's current composition, on the one hand, and the changing political, economic and social reality of the community of nations, on the other. It is essential to enlarge and balance the membership of the Security Council, as well as to increase its transparency. We must ensure that the Security Council is a body that truly reflects the diversity of the world's cultures and regions by an improved representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Austria highly appreciates the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and is very much looking forward to its report. Austria is confident that that report will give a new and innovative impetus to the reform debate.

During this session's general debate a clear majority of delegations advocated reform of the Security Council. Although the specific positions still diverge significantly, there seems to be a gathering momentum for substantive reform. That momentum, together with the fresh impetus that we expect will be generated by the report of the High-level Panel, is a unique opportunity for change. We must not miss that opportunity.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): I am honoured to participate in this debate on behalf of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Like many other Member States that have spoken before me today, the Marshall Islands sees an urgent need for the reform of the working methods and membership of the Security Council. In order for the decisions of the Council to garner the respect and support of the international community, the working methods of the Council must become more transparent and inclusive, and the membership must be made more representative. The Marshall Islands reiterates its support for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership. We support the allocation of a new permanent seat to Japan, and we also believe that priority must be given to increasing the representation of developing countries on the Council. Those reforms are crucial if the Council is to retain its legitimacy in light of the political, economic and geographic realities of the world today.

My delegation looks forward to the discussions that will take place within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group later this session. We hope that substantial progress will be made and that the Working Group will agree on recommendations that will push the reform process forward in a meaningful way.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.26

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

26th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The current session of the General Assembly is taking place in the context of a growing understanding of the need to further strengthen the United Nations as the central mechanism for the collective resolution of problems in international relations with a view to ensuring global security and stability. There can be no doubt that that objective can be achieved only if adequate resources are provided to this global Organization and if its structure and mechanisms are enhanced.

In this context, it is high time to reform the United Nations, including adapting the composition of the Security Council to the dramatically changed international realities.

The reform of the Security Council should be aimed at making that authoritative organ more representative and more effective in its decision-making. Such reform is now urgent, as the recent general debate and the current discussion have clearly demonstrated.

At the same time, we cannot close our eyes to the distinct differences in the approaches taken by Member States to the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. We are convinced that the achievement of the broadest possible consensus should remain the key benchmark in the reform process. We have an enormous responsibility to prevent division in the Organization. Our task is to lay the groundwork for the greater authority and potential of the Security Council as the main organ for maintaining international peace and security.

Russia is prepared to continue the painstaking work to bring us closer to the selection of an optimal model for the future composition of the Security Council. We are ready to examine constructive proposals on this issue, on the understanding that an increase in any category of Council membership should involve both developed and developing States, with equal rights and responsibilities being shared between them. We believe that, in the event that additional permanent seats are created, Germany, Japan, India, Brazil and an authoritative representative from Africa would be worthy candidates to claim them.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of ensuring that in its composition the renewed Council remains compact so that it can respond adequately and rapidly to the challenges of the new millennium. We are certain that those delegations that have worked in the Security Council clearly understand that an excessive expansion of the Council could have a

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negative impact on its ability to function, with repercussions for international security.

We are convinced that ideas involving the infringement of the prerogatives and authority of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the veto right, would be counter-productive. Unfounded criticism of that vital institution, which contributes to ensuring a necessary balance of interests among Council members, only stirs up unnecessary emotions and makes it harder to reach the consensus sought with regard to the reform parameters.

As to granting the veto right to new permanent members, we believe that there is no point in discussing that issue before agreement has been reached on the expanded membership of the Security Council.

Having actively supported the Secretary-General's establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the Russian Federation, like all other Member States, is looking forward with genuine interest to receiving its recommendations. We trust that Panel members will live up to their reputation as being truly wise and will develop recommendations to effectively strengthen and improve multilateral mechanisms, including the Security Council. We hope that the Secretary-General's proposals on the outcome of the work of the High-level Panel will take into account the wide range of approaches to the reform of the Security Council.

Finally, Member States will need to implement those proposals, ensuring a comprehensive strengthening of the United Nations. Based on that position, the Russian Federation will continue to constructively contribute to the process, including through contributing to the work of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly towards finding an effective and widely supported model for the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, almost every delegation included the issue of the reform of the Security Council in its statement. That once again shows the great importance that all parties attach to this issue. It also indicates the responsibility borne by the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on reform of the Security Council. We believe that this group, under the chairmanship of Assembly President Jean Ping, will engage in constructive discussions to reach consensus on a set of recommendations.

Reform of the Security Council is at the core of United Nations reform. Over the past six decades, the membership of the United Nations has increased nearly fourfold, with developing countries representing a large proportion of that increase. As one of the principal organs of the United Nations, the Security Council plays an important role in international affairs and has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It should therefore keep pace with the times and conduct rational and necessary reforms. We all maintain that reform of the Security Council should be targeted at strengthening its status as the core body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, enhancing its capacity in dealing with threats and challenges and, as a matter of priority, finding an effective solution to the under-representation of developing countries, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

Reform of the Security Council should also include the further improvement of its working methods and its transparency. Some progress has been achieved in this regard over recent years. The increasing number of public meetings, the good communication and cooperation with troop-contributing countries and the regular meetings held among the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have been received very positively by the majority of Member States. China would like to work together with other Council members to continue the efforts in that regard.

It has been more than 10 years since the General Assembly started the debate on reform of the Security Council. Given the current situation, we urgently need to accelerate the reform. Meanwhile, we should not lose sight of the fact that reform of the Council involves a multitude of factors and contradictions and that significant differences exist in the proposed specifics of the reform programme.

In-depth discussions and patient consultations are therefore called for, in order to demonstrate political will and the wisdom of compromise and to seek the broadest possible consensus on all relevant aspects. A forceful push towards a vote on a reform package could result in confrontation and division between

Member States. That would be detrimental to the reform of the Security Council, contradict its original purpose and inevitably harm the strengthening of the Council's authority and functioning.

China supports the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and looks forward to comprehensive, positive and practical recommendations that can be widely supported. China will take an active part in the relevant discussions and will work with other parties to move the reform process forward.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly is jointly considering agenda items 11 and 53, on the report of the Security Council and on the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In our delegation's view, while they are listed separately — and rightly so — the two items are closely related. We feel that they have a bearing on the hopes of the international community to see a more representative, democratic and transparent Security Council that can respond effectively and rapidly to the new challenges inherent in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter.

On this occasion, allow me to thank Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for introducing the annual report of the Council (A/59/2). I would now like to refer to that report. My delegation feels that the way in which the report was presented is limited to compliance with procedural requirements and that the structure of the report does not allow for an analysis or a substantive assessment. Such an assessment would have enabled the members of the Security Council to draw conclusions from this General Assembly debate through which to move forward on formulating a report that is more analytical, instead of a merely descriptive and chronological account of the items under consideration.

We make this comment because we feel that Member States' consideration of the report should not be a mere formality, but rather a reaffirmation of the Assembly's responsibility in matters of fundamental importance for the entire membership of the Organization. We, the Member States, have the right and the duty properly to understand and analyse the work of the Council, because the Council acts on behalf of all of us, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it in our Charter, and because its decisions affect the membership. We therefore need a report that enables us to understand the substance of the Council's discussions and of the positions it adopts on the most relevant matters before it.

We therefore support and encourage the position of previous speakers, who have insisted that the report of the Security Council should include a more interactive component for the General Assembly, since the report is the main instrument in the relationship between these two principal organs of the Organization. The maintenance of international peace and security is the responsibility of us all.

Paraguay feels that an important step in improving the presentation of the Security Council report can be found in paragraph 3 and following section A of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/126, adopted on 19 December 2003, on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

We support and encourage the process of open meetings of the Security Council. Open meetings should be the rule and not the exception, so that Member States can express their point of view on matters affecting Members and the Organization, and — though it may be optimistic to say so — so that Council members may take Members' views into account before resolutions are adopted rather than merely presenting them as faits accomplis.

Another area of concern for Paraguay is the Council's involvement in matters traditionally dealt with in the General Assembly or in the Economic and Social Council, overburdening the Security Council with matters requiring decisions but without sufficient time to deal with them properly. In addition, we are concerned at the expansion of the normative nature of the Council's resolutions, whereby the Council assumes a legislative competency that exceeds the mandate granted to it in the Charter of the United Nations.

On the question of equitable representation in the Security Council and an increase in its membership, the Open-ended Working Group established in 1993 has been meeting year after year without arriving at a consensus that would enable Member States to take a decision. Nevertheless, my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for the decisive

impetus he brought during his chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group to encourage debate and produce a report that included positions of Member States and sought to bridge the gap in the differing stances.

Member States agree on the need to reform the Security Council and to increase its membership, but not on the form and procedure for doing so, despite the fact that it is set forth in the Charter, as well as in Assembly resolution 53/30, which stipulates that the General Assembly will not adopt any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation in the Security Council, an increase in its membership and related matters without a vote in favour by at least two thirds of the Members of the General Assembly. In order to preserve the integrity of our Organization we need to arrive at a consensus on this question, as it concerns one of the fundamental organs that sustains our Organization.

Paraguay eagerly awaits the report to be submitted at the end of the year by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General to consider present and future threats to international peace and security. The recommendations in that report may well contribute to building a consensus on reform of the body entrusted with collective security.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate the well-known position of Paraguay on the question of equitable representation in the Security Council and on an increase in its membership. Paraguay favours an increase in the number of members in the Security Council in order to take into account the political realities of today and the increase in the number of Member States in our Organization. To build a more democratic and representative Security Council, both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — should be increased and should include both developed and developing countries, particularly as developing countries have been underrepresented in that important body. An increase in the Council's membership will make it more representative and will therefore improve the legitimacy and credibility of its actions.

Similarly, as a fundamental aspect of reform, we need to consider the question of the right of veto that is held by permanent members. We must work towards the gradual elimination of the veto until it can be completely done away with. A first step should be to limit it strictly to questions under Chapter VII of the Charter. Similarly, we could leave open the possibility for periodic review of reform in order to assess the functioning of the Security Council in accordance with future needs and realities.

Today we must shoulder our responsibilities and make the political decision to move this process forward and achieve the objective desired by the majority of Member States. In that regard, we trust in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and we hope that in the coming months he will help us to find a way to move forward in this exercise and arrive at the conclusion we have so long hoped for.

In conclusion, I would reiterate that no reform of the United Nations will have the desired effect if the long-awaited reform of the Security Council is not realized. Until then, we will not be able to speak of an Organization that has kept pace with the times nor will that Organization be able to respond to the interests and aspirations of the international community.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): It is my great pleasure to take part on behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam in the debate on the two important agenda items relating to the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Jones Parry, for introducing the Council's report. Our sincere thanks also go to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council — chaired by Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly — for its contributions and its report, which serves as a good basis for our discussion today. We look forward to receiving the report of the High-level Panel on Challenges, Threats and Change and will study its recommendations carefully for further deliberation.

The past year has really been a year of hard work for the Security Council, as reflected in the great number of meetings it has held and the wide range of complex and urgent issues it has had to tackle, from escalated conflicts and violence to terrorism and humanitarian crises. Fifty-nine resolutions were

adopted and 45 presidential statements were made. We wish to express our great appreciation for the efforts of the members of the Council.

Having closely followed the work of the Council, the delegation of Viet Nam acknowledges that there has been an evolution in some of its working methods and practice.

As mentioned in the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/58/47), since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/126 — which provides for, inter alia, orientation of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council — progress has been made with regard to the regular briefing of the President of the General Assembly by the President of the Security Council on the work of the Council. The practice of providing non-Council members with necessary information about the preparation of draft resolutions and decisions is also positive and should be encouraged.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The current structure and composition of the Council's membership do not reflect today's realities; indeed, they are limiting its ability to carry out its mandate effectively. In 1963, when the membership of the Council was expanded to 15, the total membership of the United Nations was 112; therefore, the Council's membership represented 13 per cent of the membership of the Organization. Today, the Organization has 191 members, and the Council's membership represents only 7.85 per cent of the membership of the Organization. For that very reason, and because of the manner in which the Council's resolutions and decisions are negotiated, the legitimacy of those resolutions and decisions has constantly been questioned. Reform of the Council is urgent and inevitable, and it must be carried out in a way that will make the Council more representative and more democratic.

Viet Nam shares the view of the majority of Member States that Security Council reform must include expansion of its membership, with due attention to the need to ensure more adequate representation of developing countries and to improve its decision-making process. Viet Nam supports increasing the Council's membership in both categories — permanent and non-permanent — and supports measures aimed at ensuring broader participation and greater democracy, accountability and transparency in its work. With regard to expanding the permanent membership of the Council in the light of its present unbalanced structure, we are of the view that, in addition to capable countries such as India, Japan and Germany — for which Viet Nam has voiced its support — other capable developing countries from various continents should be able to join the Council as permanent members.

Viet Nam attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council, and we have announced our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Council in the near term. There is every reason for us to want the Council to be strengthened and its work to be improved. Such strengthening and improvement will depend on how well and how soon we will be able to reform the Council. We look forward to joining our efforts with those of other Member States in that important process.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): A year ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his statement to this body, announced that the United Nations had reached a fork in the road. He decided to establish a High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to assess the current situation and to make recommendations on the way forward. In his statement to the General Assembly at its 3rd meeting two weeks ago, the Secretary-General highlighted the lack of the rule of law, or of respect for it, to be a root cause of the key problems that the world faces today.

Indeed, those are related issues. Today, the world is confronted with radically new threats, not the least of which are global terrorist networks that respect neither national boundaries nor traditional international law. Clearly, the United Nations needs to fashion new practical rules to deal with those new threats. Yet, at the same time, we must continue to ensure that there are adequate safeguards against traditional threats. Finding the right balance between those equally urgent imperatives will not be easy. But it will not be impossible if we can find the discipline to debate the issues openly and realistically, with a clear appreciation of both the limitations and the potential of the United Nations.

Singapore is looking forward to the report of the High-level Panel. We understand that the Panel has conducted a broad overview of the current international situation and has looked at how the international

community could better address the threats, challenges and change that it faces. Unfortunately, news reports about the Panel's work have focused almost exclusively on the issue of Security Council reform, as if that were the only issue that the High-level Panel had been tasked to deal with. The Panel's discussions have also precipitated a race by a number of countries — no fewer than nine at last count — to put themselves forward as aspiring new permanent members of an expanded Security Council. Four of those aspirants have even met to forge a joint strategy.

Singapore is concerned that such a focus on Security Council reform may result in the general findings and other important recommendations of the High-level Panel not receiving the attention that they merit. Worse still, there is a risk that, if the report of the High-level Panel fails to meet the expectations of the aspiring States, they might reject the report out of hand. We sincerely hope and trust that that will not be the case.

We are also concerned that the vying for new permanent membership foreshadows a fierce fight — something that small States like Singapore do not relish. As the saying goes, "Among these elephants, whether they fight or make love, it is the poor grass that gets trampled". Indeed, if this tussle heats up, smaller States can expect direct pressure — on the one hand, from these aspirants to support them, and on the other, from their detractors not to do so.

Against that backdrop, I would like to examine some of the arguments that have been put forward for expanding the Security Council. Many of those arguments are well known. The key argument has been that the world has changed tremendously since 1945 but that the United Nations Charter and the composition of the Security Council — especially its permanent membership — have remained essentially unchanged. Let us not forget that the Charter, which contains ideals that we must never relinquish, has been continuously interpreted and reinterpreted to meet changing geopolitical circumstances and new challenges, many of which were unforeseen by the founders of the United Nations.

As regards the institutional structure of the Organization — especially that of the Security Council — the configuration in 1945 reflected the reality of the distribution of power in the world at that time. If we were to try to capture the current reality, we would be setting ourselves up for a major disappointment. The fact is that, at present, one country wields power that far exceeds that of all the other permanent members and all the aspirants combined. If we were to try to make the Council reflect that current reality, the only way we could do so would be to have just one permanent member. The fact is that the United Nations can operate only on the basis of a hard-headed appreciation of the realities of power. If we try to deny that fact and force the issue, we stand to do the United Nations a great disservice.

A second frequent argument is that if the Security Council is to be credible, it must be representative. Some have pointed to the trend of the Council's increasing legislative role in order to argue that urgent expansion of the Council is needed, including in its permanent ranks. But what real guarantee can Member States — especially small States like Singapore — have that an expanded Council will become more, not less, open to consultation and that it will take the views of non-Council members more into account? The reason for my concern is that, whereas the current five permanent members represent about 25 per cent of the world's total population, the addition of, say, another five permanent members from among the leading aspirants would bring that percentage up to 50 per cent or more of the world's population. Since together they would represent a majority of the world's population, would that not increase the tendency of the permanent members to feel that they can legitimately make decisions on everyone's behalf?

Moreover, a number of countries have been saying that their citizens have been clamouring for their countries to become permanent members in return for the significant financial contributions of those countries. By the same logic, should Council decisions also be influenced if the citizens of the permanent members press directly for particular approaches, on the grounds that "he who pays the piper calls the tune"? That is a real possibility, given that the combined contributions to the United Nations budget of the current permanent members and five of the leading aspirants would rise from 37.25 per cent to 67.45 per cent. Thus, the legislative role of the Security Council may increase significantly, which would risk going beyond what the general membership can accept.

That said, please do not get me wrong, as I am not against the expansion of the Security Council.

What I am saying is that we need to be clear and to agree on the objectives of such an exercise and how best to go about expanding the Council. Unfortunately, I do not see that as the case after 11 years of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. In Singapore's view, if our aim is to render the Council more credible and more effective, we need a comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects, including its working methods. The credibility of an organization or institution rests not on any nebulous notion of representativeness, but on its performance, which determines the degree to which its decisions are accepted by its stakeholders. Going by the work of the Council over the past year and by its report — which, unfortunately, was made available only very late last week — if Member States are to give an honest assessment of the Council's performance in the discharge of its functions, I am not sure how well the Council would be rated.

What matters to small countries is the Security Council's effectiveness and transparency and the involvement of non-members when issues of direct interest to them are considered. Any organizational management consultant will tell us that there is no better way to induce good performance than a measure of transparency and accountability. Regrettably, even as most governance processes in the world have moved towards greater transparency over the last few decades, the Security Council until very lately moved in the opposite direction. Some of us might be astonished to learn that the first Security Council meetings and discussions — today, often held in closed sessions — were in fact held in the open and on record, with reports of the frank exchanges available for all to read. I have circulated, together with my statement, a copy of the verbatim records of the first Security Council meeting on 17 January 1946, which shows clearly the quality of Council discussions back then. In fact, there was so much transparency at the first meeting of the Security Council that the United Kingdom delegate, without realizing that his microphone was switched on, was heard saying: "That bloody Chairman has double-crossed me again". That, by the way, does not appear in the copy of the records that I have circulated.

Paradoxically, I submit that, if the Council were to become more transparent in its normal work, it would gain confidentiality where confidentiality matters, as everyone will accept that the Council's work necessarily involves a number of sensitive discussions. Conversely, the current practice of holding all its real discussions behind closed doors has not enabled the Council to keep anything secret. On the contrary, the difficulty posed to non-Council members in following the proceedings seems to challenge them to uncover everything that is said behind closed doors, sometimes resulting in delegates' feeding off rumours and misleading information.

Along with a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, in considering how to expand the Council's membership it may also be useful to consider the kind of criteria that would help us to reach common agreement on the optimal new configuration of the Council. Having said that, Singapore is intuitively of the view that if the General Assembly can agree on the expansion of the permanent membership, Japan and Germany are two obvious candidates. I should add, however, that any expansion of permanent membership should include both developed and developing countries and be accompanied by an appropriate increase in non-permanent seats to maintain the current ratio of permanent to non-permanent seats.

Given the time constraint, I shall not delve further into the issue of criteria for now, except to note that practically all the aspirants are big States. But that leads me to wonder whether size is really that essential. Can big States empathize with and understand the problems and concerns of small States, which comprise the majority of Member States?

Finally, as the powers of new permanent members are intrinsic to the definition of permanent membership, the question of the veto has to be dealt with head on. We all know that however undemocratic the veto may be, it is here to stay with us for the foreseeable future. And it is not without a certain utility insofar as it helps prevent conflicts among the major Powers, which could undermine the United Nations. In fact, the San Francisco decision of 1945 concerning the veto was deliberately contrived to prevent the new Organization — the United Nations — from being plagued by what was regarded as the critical defect of the League: the non-membership of some of the great Powers.

It has been argued that the veto acts as a failsafe mechanism, or, as Inis Claude puts it,

> "the fuse in the electrical circuit... the proposition that it is better to have the lights go out than have the building burst into flames".

If that justification for the retention of the veto by the original five permanent members has any validity, then the question that arises is whether any new permanent member that is not given the veto is really deserving of that status. In short, the issue of the veto is not a question that can be postponed or discussed separately from the identity of new permanent members. And, for that matter, there is no way we can expect the general membership of the United Nations to accept being relegated from the current second-class status to a new third-class status by the creation of a new class of Security Council membership: permanent members without veto rights.

Here, I foresee a difficult problem to overcome, as none of the existing permanent members has expressed a commitment to extending the veto privilege to eventual new permanent members. Unless we approach that and other issues relating to Security Council reform in a pragmatic and realistic manner, we may only end up raising our hopes, but without any tangible results to show for it at the end of the day.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): The report on the work of the Security Council that has been submitted by the United Kingdom presidency details all the activities of the Council over the past year. I thank the Romanian delegation, which oversaw the drafting of the report, unanimously approved by the Security Council membership.

This exercise contributes towards the need for transparency in the Council's work and the development of critical exchanges between the Council and the General Assembly. The High-level Panel created by the Secretary-General will soon forward its recommendations on the reform of the Organization. They will most probably include proposals for improving the Security Council's working methods and for making it more effective. France will study the contents of that report with the greatest attention and in a constructive and open spirit.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council will also be among the subjects to be addressed by the Panel's report. In that regard, as the Foreign Minister of France recalled in his statement to the General Assembly on 16 September, France favours an increase in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. In that respect, we have voiced our support for the candidatures of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India, along with one African State.

France hopes that the coming year will provide an opportunity to register decisive progress on the road to the reform of the Organization, especially with respect to the expansion of the Council. France will continue to participate actively in the current debate on that subject.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fully agrees with the attention being given to issues involving threats to international peace and security such as the situation in Iraq, the situation in the Middle East, the question of Haiti and the general situation in Africa. Not only have those issues characterized the work of the United Nations over the past year but they have also underlined the importance of multilateralism and the urgent need to strengthen the role of our Organization.

However, we emphasize that it is important for the Security Council to define its priorities and to limit itself to the functions and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the Security Council must direct its action to those situations representing a definite threat to international peace and security and avoid deliberations and decisions that could entail interference in the internal affairs of States.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our position on some items on the agenda of the Security Council.

Venezuela firmly and categorically condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It reaffirms its commitment to combating terrorism and adds its efforts to those of other countries to combat that scourge, which is a threat to international peace and security. But we must say again that terrorism cannot be fought in a way that will unleash further terrorism. We must also uncover the causes of acts that are described as terrorism. Those causes are nothing other than the poverty and the exploitation to which the majority of the world population is subjected. We therefore reaffirm that the response to terrorism starts and ends with the protection and the promotion of human rights.

Venezuela shares the international community's deep concern at the current situation in Iraq. We reaffirm that the invasion of Iraq by United States

forces violates the United Nations Charter and international law. We express our solidarity with the people of Iraq in its rightful exercise of self-determination and in its fight to establish a sovereign and independent Government free from foreign Powers.

With respect to the Middle East, Venezuela is convinced that a lasting solution to the question of Palestine is the principal approach for restoring peace in the region. Venezuela endorses the agreements reached between Arabs and Israelis in the search for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. We reaffirm our support of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and we support the right of States of the region to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders. We believe that a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). However, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is concerned at the recent military actions in the Gaza Strip, which have caused a high number of deaths and injuries among the civilian Palestinian population. We therefore insist that the aforementioned Security Council resolutions must be complied with. Our position has always been based on the principles of domestic and foreign policy contained in our Constitution, including the promotion and the protection of human rights — in this case, in order to contribute to peace in the Middle East.

With respect to Haiti, Venezuela considers it indispensable to carry out a thorough investigation of the causes of the overthrow and kidnapping of President Aristide. The well-being of the Haitians is of prime importance to us, and we believe that humanitarian aid to the people of that country must be maintained and strengthened. In the current year, Venezuela has given the following assistance to Haiti: $1 million from the budget of the Ministry of Finance, 2 million litres of fuel for the generation of electricity, $50,000 in direct assistance from the Special Fund for the Caribbean for food and medicine for the people of Haiti. Venezuela is attentively following the unfolding of events in Haiti and believes that the situation there should remain on the agenda of the United Nations.

With respect to Africa, we stress that Venezuela supports the efforts to protect human rights. In that context, while reaffirming respect for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of the Sudan, we consider that a peaceful solution ought to be found for the conflict in the Darfur region, thus protecting the civilian population of the country, which has been the most sorely affected by the conflict.

With respect to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council, the increase of its membership and related matters, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms that Security Council reform should be conceived as a thorough and structural change and that it must necessarily include the abolition of the veto power. Only thus can reform be positive, progressive and strictly adherent to multilateralism on both the question of balanced representation on the Council and on the increase of its membership.

Mr. Lippwe (Micronesia): I wish to make a brief comment on agenda item 53. The brevity of my statement is not intended to minimize either the importance of the issue before the Assembly today or my delegation's appreciation of the important and daunting task facing our Organization. Rather, it is in recognition of the fact that the time has come for us all to roll up our sleeves and set out to conclude the important work before us.

Today we find ourselves yet again discussing the question of equitable representation on, and increase in the membership of, the Security Council. While the topic has been on the agenda for years now, the lack of progress has been a concern to my delegation.

Today, again, the delegation of Micronesia joins with many other members of this body in calling for attention to be given to the reform of the United Nations. We need a strong and effective United Nations — a United Nations that is able to better respond effectively to the challenges of a new era.

First and foremost, we call on all the Members of this Organization to give fresh consideration to reforming the Security Council in such a way as to better reflect present-day realities. We note the increased and expanded scope of the role of the Security Council in the promotion of international peace and security. Such an expanded role must be carried out with maximum cooperation and participation from the international community. In order to meet emerging challenges, we see the need to reform and enlarge the Security Council so that it becomes truly representative in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. A more balanced and representative Security Council would

lead to greater international acceptance of the work of the Council and would better meet the expectations of people around the globe. At the same time, the Council should not grow so big as to hamper its effectiveness. The developing world, finding itself marginalized in the current set-up of the Council, should hold a fair number of seats.

Particular consideration must be given to Japan, one of the largest contributors to the United Nations budget and a major participant in United Nations peacekeeping. Japan has consistently committed substantial resources to the Organization and to the maintenance of global peace and security. Any reform of the Security Council would be incomplete without Japan's becoming a permanent member. My delegation also believes that Germany and India deserve inclusion as members on a reformed Council.

Finally, while members of the Assembly are discussing the reform of our Organization, my delegation believes that attention must also be given to certain obsolete provisions of the United Nations Charter. The time has come for the "enemy state" clauses in the United Nations Charter to be removed.

It is my delegation's hope that decades of pronouncements will now be translated into action. We are encouraged that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General to consider matters of peace and security will begin to come forward with concrete and practical recommendations to make the United Nations more responsive to global realties. Micronesia looks forward to the Panel's report and is ready to do its part as a responsible Member of the Organization.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, for presenting the annual report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. By combining analytical components and comprehensive factual material, this document adds to the promising trend of the last several years towards improving the quality of these annual guides to the Council's activities.

During the period under review, from August 2003 through July 2004, the international community continued to face numerous daunting challenges which directly relate to the Security Council's main sphere of responsibility: the maintenance of international peace and security. What is the nature of these challenges? Has the Council succeeded in identifying — if not preventing — potential threats in a timely manner? Was that body's performance in resolving crises and conflict situations adequate and effective? Has the Security Council made progress in developing a forward-looking strategy to respond to future global threats? Those are just a few of the questions to be addressed, and they are not merely rhetorical.

Ukraine is convinced that the Security Council should continue to use its unique potential to mobilize the international community to fight terrorism. The vicious series of heinous terrorist attacks committed around the world leaves no doubt that the very system of peace and security set up and promoted by the United Nations is at stake.

We trust that the establishment of a new, effective system of information exchange on terrorism will be helpful in preventing the spread of this scourge. The framework established by the Security Council for a global response to international terrorism has to be maintained and reinforced. In that regard, we believe the adoption of resolution 1566 (2004) will further strengthen the essential coordinating role of the United Nations in the international campaign against the terrorist threat. The Counter-Terrorism Committee should continue its proactive dialogue with Member States. We hope that its Executive Directorate will be fully operational in the very near future.

The Security Council has managed to overcome past differences over the Iraqi issue, showing unity in addressing that problem. We firmly believe that the Council's instruments are very important for normalizing the situation in that country. Ukraine welcomes the Council's clear definition of the United Nations role in Iraq. Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) achieves one of the main objectives pursued by Ukraine, namely that the United Nations should play a substantial and tangible role in the electoral and reconstruction processes in Iraq. My country pledges its assistance to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in carrying out his demanding mission.

We believe that the Security Council could do more than just hold monthly briefings and rare open debates in dealing with the crisis in the Middle East. Resolution 1515 (2003), with its endorsement of the Quartet's road map, has become a truly important step

forward. It has reaffirmed the wide consensus in the international community that that plan provides the best way to realize the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. But additional concerted efforts are absolutely indispensable to achieving this result.

My delegation commends the Security Council for its efforts in Afghanistan. Although main responsibility for finding a political solution to the Afghan issue lies squarely with the Afghan people themselves, we are convinced that the Security Council should continue to be actively involved in resolving all the various aspects of that issue.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through non-State actors remains a major threat to international peace and security. We are convinced that the Security Council must play a role in the multilateral efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Therefore we welcome the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004), which gave an additional dimension to those efforts. Ukraine believes that it is important for the Council to provide assistance in implementing this resolution to States that may require it.

Another issue to which I would like to draw the Assembly's attention relates to the problem of the so-called frozen conflicts, which were left as unhealed scars in the newly independent States that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The international community cannot turn a blind eye to the lack of progress in the settlement of conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia, and in Nagorny Karabakh, the Republic of Azerbaijan. There is also an urgent need to resolve the Transdniestrian conflict. Postponing a final settlement of those crises might have irreversible consequences. We call on international organizations, above all the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other important bodies involved, to accelerate their respective efforts in resolving those conflicts.

In the Balkan region, following the March outburst of violence in Kosovo, there have been encouraging developments towards mending the damage caused to inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation. The Security Council should continue to keep the situation in Kosovo under close scrutiny.

We welcome the trend towards the further strengthening of cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations. Over the past decade, there have been quite a few encouraging examples of how United Nations peacekeeping missions can be effectively supported and complemented by United Nations-mandated operations of other organizations. The United Nations could and should actively use this important practical tool and increasingly rely on regional structures to assume more responsibilities.

In that regard, we are satisfied to see increased interaction between the Council and its partners in Africa. Making full use of the expertise of African organizations has proved to be the most effective way of dealing with African conflicts. For that reason, we feel that, confronted with the crisis in Darfur, the Security Council should follow the same path by providing the African Union with the necessary resources and political support.

I think I express our common conviction by saying that lessons learned by the international community during the past year have strengthened our resolve to make the Security Council more powerful, unified and proactive. We trust that that goal can be reached, first and foremost through comprehensive Security Council reform in all its aspects. Ukraine considers the reform of the Council to be a process of exceptional international significance. Making that body more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent, especially with regard to the decision-making process, is a prerequisite for success in the overall adaptation of the United Nations to the challenging realities of today's world.

We take positive note of the increased international attention to the issue of reform that was expressly articulated in this Hall just two weeks ago during the Assembly's general debate. I would like now to briefly recall some basic elements of my country's position on this issue.

First, Ukraine believes Security Council reform should be carried out in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Secondly, we attach primary importance to the allocation of an additional non-permanent seat to the Group of Eastern European States. Thirdly, the interests of all regional Groups should be taken into

account in the process of the enlargement of the Council.

The delegation of Ukraine pins high hopes on relevant recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and pledges its constructive cooperation.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): Today I am delivering one of my first statements in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. I wish to take this opportunity, Sir, to welcome you in your important position as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to wish you great success in your endeavours.

At the current session, we are once again discussing a key issue relating to the development of the work of the Organization, an issue that has been on our agenda for more than 10 years and which, without any exaggeration, is of concern to all those for whom the United Nations is a common home.

Just a little more than a week separates us from the date when together we will all celebrate the fifty-ninth anniversary of the creation of our Organization. During those years, the world has changed fundamentally. Scholars have made a study of fallen empires on whose remnants new States have emerged. The international situation too has changed drastically. The world breathed a sigh of relief following the end of the cold war; then came new threats and challenges, first and foremost international terrorism in all its forms.

The United Nations family has added 140 new Members since its creation, and we realize today that new measures are required in order to breathe fresh life into work of the Security Council, the fundamental organ of the Organization, and to ensure that an expanded Council will be able to react appropriately to the events taking place in a rapidly changing world. Any organ or mechanism can become old or worn out, and the timely influx of new blood or the replacement of worn-out parts helps to rejuvenate and strengthen its work.

For example, we are considering the need for and feasibility of reforming the Security Council through increasing its membership and ensuring more equitable representation. The Kyrgyz Republic is ready to support proposals aimed at bringing the Organization fully into line with the realities of the new twenty-first century. Today many States on various continents are playing an increasing international role. Without detracting from the activities of any other State, we wish to note the active position of Germany and Japan in international affairs, their financial contribution to the work of the United Nations and the political and economic weight of these States on the international scene.

We take this opportunity to recall the words of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, as expressed from this rostrum at the 13th meeting of the current session: that "the United Nations at its anniversary session can and must decide to include Germany and Japan among the permanent members of the Council".

The Kyrgyz Republic has frequently said that the optimum would be to expand the Council's membership to 25, with seven permanent members, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. Moreover, we are convinced that the Security Council should be guided primarily by the interests of humankind as a whole, resolving issues of a global nature and avoiding lobbying by regional groups or other groups of countries to further their own interests.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): We welcome the report of the Security Council (A/59/2), introduced by this month's Council President, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sir Emyr Jones Parry. The report highlights the challenges and successes of various United Nations peacekeeping missions and peacemaking efforts. One of these is the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), the mission in my country, Timor-Leste.

On this occasion, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Security Council members for their support to the mission. Without their strong commitment, and that of our neighbours and of the international community at large, our people would not have achieved peace, freedom, democracy and human rights.

In May next year, the peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste will be terminated. In a meeting last week between the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, we reiterated our view that the people of Timor-Leste continue to need a United Nations presence to support the justice, finance and police sectors.

With respect to other issues referred to in the Security Council's report, we would like to highlight the situation in Darfur, in the Sudan. We believe that cooperation between the Security Council, the African Union and the Sudanese Government is the best way to bring peace and to protect the lives of all peoples in the region.

Regarding Western Sahara and Palestine and other conflicts under consideration, we urge the Security Council to continue its efforts to devise new initiatives in order to find a peaceful solution that is acceptable to the peoples concerned.

The United Nations is the most precious creation of a generation of great and visionary leaders. We all have inherited this Organization; the memory of the destruction and brutality, and the suffering of our fellow human beings, during the Second World War, and the profound desire to save future generations from another, even more devastating war greatly influenced the founding members in shaping the United Nations Charter and in providing the powers necessary to the different organs to fulfil their mandates.

On the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, we have to recognize that, while it is true that our world and our peoples have not experienced a massive worldwide war, internal conflicts have ravaged many of our peoples, many millions of fellow human beings have died, and many millions are still suffering.

Our world has changed; there are new challenges and new threats. The membership of the United Nations has increased from 51 to 191, and we all recognize the changes that have occurred and the need for the Organization to adapt.

We welcome the Security Council's proactive role in dealing with terrorism through the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001). We commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established by General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 to facilitate discussions on reform of the Security Council. We are also waiting expectantly for the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

On the issue of the reform of the Security Council, we have already expressed our support for the paper put forward by France and Germany which recognizes the need to enlarge the Council to around 24 members.

As my Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ramos-Horta, has stated, we believe that developed countries such as Japan and Germany, and developing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia and India should be allocated permanent seats on the Security Council. We also support the allocation of two or more permanent seats to Africa, in accordance with the decision taken by the heads of State and Government of the African Union at the Harare Summit.

We believe that there is a need for the majority of us — those medium and small countries that are not candidates for permanent seats — to continue to exchange views in order to ensure that the rights of our nations and peoples are better represented and protected.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): I would like first to thank Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report of the Security Council to this body yesterday morning. My delegation fully agrees with the assertion that the work of the Security Council was intensive during the reporting period, and it is particularly gratifying that the Council was able to overcome the divisions and discord brought about by the military action in Iraq and to move forward in a constructive way in fulfilling its responsibility to maintain international peace and stability.

The past months have once again proved the central role of the United Nations in general and the leading role of the Security Council as an irreplaceable instrument of the international community in the maintenance of world peace and security.

Concerning agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", my delegation fully shares the view that the issue of Security Council reform — which is long overdue — is key to the overall reform of the United Nations. In that respect, we commend the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session for his hard work and the Open-ended Working Group on having made some progress on cluster 2 issues last year. The Working Group, however, remains deadlocked and unable to agree on the most important cluster 1 issues, including the enlargement of the

Security Council, the question of regional representation, the criteria for membership, the use of the veto, accountability, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and so on.

Indeed, if the Security Council is to carry on its role as the principal organ for effective multilateralism and deal with existing and emerging threats and challenges, it has to be thoroughly reformed. It is our expectation that the Secretary-General will come up with breakthrough reform proposals on the basis of the report and the recommendations made by the High-level Panel.

Mongolia shares the view that the composition of the Security Council should better reflect current world realities. My delegation wishes to stress that enlargement is not a goal in itself. The need for enlargement arises from the necessity to ensure the right balance of representation in this important body as well as the credibility of its decisions. As stipulated in paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter:

> "[The] Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf."

The Security Council thus represents all Members. Yet, over the past 59 years, the ratio of that representation has decreased by a factor of 2.7 compared to what it was at the time of the Organization's inception. The issue is therefore how to ensure that the composition of the Security Council duly reflects the current realities of the general membership.

Mongolia supports a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and elected seats, with the representation of developing and developed countries ensured. It is hard to understand why Africa and Latin America do not have any permanent seats in the Council. Likewise, I do not think that it is just or right that Asia — home to more than half of the world's population — has only one permanent seat. Why should Japan, whose contribution to the United Nations budget exceeds that of four current permanent members combined, be denied a permanent membership?

My delegation is of the view that, in selecting additional permanent members, a package approach could be adopted, including criteria such as geographical distribution, a genuine commitment to the goals and objectives of the United Nations, and a capacity to contribute substantially to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that respect, Mongolia supports the legitimate aspirations of countries such as Japan, Germany and India, which are willing and able to shoulder greater responsibility in pursuit of international peace, security and development. The composition of the Security Council should be small enough to work effectively and large enough to duly represent the current United Nations membership.

We all know that the greatest strength of the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular is their legitimacy. It is our belief that, if the general membership has a feeling of being rightly represented in the Council, its decisions will bear more legitimacy and credibility and the Member States' willingness to abide by its decisions will naturally increase, thus greatly enhancing the moral and political impacts of its actions. However, such compliance cannot be taken for granted if the perception of the legitimacy of the Council's decisions is in doubt among the wider United Nations membership.

Another important aspect of the Security Council's reform relates to the very way it works and functions. That body ought to be democratized. Historical evidence clearly proves that the veto power has been used more often in defence of the national interests of the permanent members than for the sake of a common cause, and has thus become one of the main impediments to the effectiveness of the work of the Council. In that regard, a comprehensive review of the veto power should be one of the first priorities. We believe that the proposals offered by some delegations on limiting the veto power to matters under Chapter VII deserve our close attention. The veto could be replaced gradually by consensual decision-making.

The further democratization of the work of the Council through increased transparency and openness is also important, especially in the context of reviewing its relationship with the General Assembly. We note some progress in that direction.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council as an institution also depend on the further

elaboration and development of the specific responsibilities of permanent members and elected members alike. If we manage to overcome the structural weaknesses of the Security Council and to create such a built-in incentive, a clear-cut sense of common responsibility will emerge and all the Security Council members could work closely together for the common good. Privileges should come with increased responsibilities. My delegation would like to stress that the reform of the Security Council and its empowerment should progress in parallel, not in detriment to the increased authority and role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations.

The reform of the Security Council, and especially its expansion, require the taking of bold political decisions. Perhaps the more than 10 years of fruitless talks and deadlock prompted the Secretary General to establish the High-level Panel of experts. We should be mindful that time is of the essence. If we keep failing in our efforts to reach a consensus and to solve the issue of the reform of the Security Council, voices for solving the institutional reform outside United Nations bodies could take the upper hand. We sincerely hope that genuine political will and determination among us will prevail at last.

Mr. U Win Mra (Myanmar): At the outset, I should like to thank the President of the Security Council for October for introducing the annual report of the Council for the period under review. Since the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States in accordance with the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter, it is only natural that they be kept informed of the work of the Council to enable them to analyse and give their views thereon.

My delegation welcomes various improvements in the Council's working methods to promote transparency and accountability to the wider membership. The increased use of public meetings; monthly meetings between the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Council; consultations by the Council's President with regional groups; and regular briefings by the Council's presidency for non-members have been cited among some improvements of the Council's working methods.

The recent consultations between some members of the Security Council and members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the participation of non-members in a meeting of the Security Council Working Group on peacekeeping are also considered to be positive developments in the relationship between the Security Council and the United Nations membership as a whole.

Despite some of those improvements, my delegation is of the view that the report should be more comprehensive, substantive and analytical if we are to have a better understanding of the Council's work. Moreover, the timely submission of the Council's report is essential to enable the Assembly to effectively respond to it.

There is now a growing tendency to engage in thematic discussions in the Council. That is a welcome development, as it allows greater participation of Member States in the discussions. However, my delegation is of the view that thematic discussions carried out by the Council, especially on issues that do not fall within the mandate to maintain international peace and security, can be counterproductive.

My delegation hails the important work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Myanmar unequivocally condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations. We are cooperating closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee. In that, regard I would like to inform the Assembly that Myanmar has signed or acceded to 11 of the 12 international legal instruments related to terrorism. It has also submitted its third report to the Committee.

Let me now turn to the question of the reform of the Security Council. The debate on reform has been going on for more than a decade without, however, having produced tangible results. The progress achieved in consideration of the cluster II issues dealing with the working methods of the Council is an encouraging development. Regarding the question of increase in membership of the Council, notwithstanding the widespread convergence of views in favour of its increase to better reflect the current realities, there are still substantial differences of view concerning the size of the Council.

My delegation is of the view that the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories so as to be more representative and reflective of contemporary political and economic

realities. We would also like to underline the importance of the need to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council in its expansion. Since the veto is considered to be anachronistic, discriminatory and undemocratic, its use should be curtailed preparatory to its complete elimination. It is also our view that, in the expanded Council, the new permanent members should enjoy the same rights and privileges as the current members.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, heads of State or Government decided that efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects should be intensified. In this regard, the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities on Threats, Challenges and Change, established by the Secretary-General, could act as a catalyst in giving further impetus to the reform of the Council. We look forward with keen interest to its recommendations.

My delegation commends the good work done by the Chairman of the Working Group on Security Council reform, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and the members of his Bureau. In my delegation's view, the six topics put forward by the Bureau for discussion in the Working Group remain as valid as ever. Those topics should continue to be used as a basis for discussion at the fifty-ninth session, building upon the work done during the previous session and with a view to facilitating the process of reaching general agreement on the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for our consideration.

The annual discussion of the report of the Security Council in plenary meeting is, we believe, a necessary practice that promotes follow-up and monitoring of the work of the Security Council by all Members of the Organization. We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its previous session, Mr. Julian Hunte, as well as the Permanent Representatives of Ecuador and of Liechtenstein, for their efforts in the context of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

The international community is facing new and major challenges in the area of peace and security. Events in recent years have, without doubt, had a negative effect on our Organization, particularly the Security Council, as the main body entrusted with collective security.

At the same time, the United Nations is involved in a comprehensive reform process aimed at enabling it to adapt its structure and functioning to current realities and to make it more effective and more credible with regard to its capacity to respond and react rapidly. There can be no doubt that the current level of representation on the Security Council — which has only 15 members — is not in keeping with international realities. Since the creation of the Organization, not only has the number of countries Members of the Organization increased disproportionately in relation to the number of members of the Council, but the axis of global power in 1945, reflected in the distribution of permanent seats on the Council, has changed. In the light of that fact, there can be no doubt that the Security Council must change to reflect the new international realities.

Argentina believes that the reform of the Council must be carried out within the broader process of United Nations reform. Likewise, that cannot happen if broad consensus is not achieved first. It cannot be an isolated event; nor can it be partial — limited solely to an increase in the number of members. Its working methods must be reformed with a view to increasing its transparency and efficiency.

The Security Council must be more representative — that is clear. But it must also be more democratic. That has been the traditional position of our country. Our delegation was a participant in the San Francisco Conference of 1945 and, referring to the right to veto, we stated at the time that we were not opposed to it, since what is just and desirable in a legal sense may not be politically possible.

Speaking to the General Assembly in 1946, the first Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador José Arce, stated that the right to veto should be eliminated in favour of the exercise of the combined will of two thirds or three quarters of the members of the Council. While today it may be politically impossible to completely eliminate the veto, we believe that

conditions do exist to limit its use solely to cases provided for under Chapter VII of the Charter.

As Argentina has reaffirmed since the discussions on Council reform began, we support an increase in the membership of the Council — but only in the non-permanent category. The permanent seats are the result of a special situation existing after the Second World War, as is the right to veto, which was granted to the permanent members.

Argentina has an open position on Council reform. We can explore different alternatives and mobilize the international community in the process of reform in order to find formulas that are better adapted to the work that we are doing. Argentina is not against anyone; we are simply in favour of a much more democratic Security Council.

We await with interest the report of the High-level Panel convened by the Secretary-General, and we trust that it will be able to provide positive elements that enable us to move forward in the process of reform.

Argentina has contributed to the work of the Panel by submitting a position paper dealing with various matters, including Security Council reform. The proposals of the Panel must be considered by the General Assembly. As we all know, that is the only body that can take a decision on reform. Any development related to reform must be carried out by means of recommendations submitted in due course to the General Assembly by the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Such recommendations should be adopted by general agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the objective of Security Council reform is to ensure compliance with the purposes of the United Nations, respecting the interests of all Member States. Only in that way can we strengthen the main body entrusted with collective security.

The images that we see daily in the media should prompt us not to make a mistake but to act for the future of our Organization — which is the future of humanity as a whole. Let us not miss this opportunity. Let us carry out reform in the interests of the democratization and efficiency of the Security Council.

Mr. Beck (Palau): In pursuit of the most effective means of strengthening the credibility of the United Nations, Palau urges this body to reform the Security Council so that it reflects the realities of the international community in the twenty-first century. It is our belief that countries that consistently play a major role in the maintenance of international peace and security should always participate in the decision-making processes of the Security Council.

Palau believes that the Security Council should be expanded to include developing and developed countries as new members. While several countries — on the basis of their active world leadership, their large populations and their geographic positions — are appropriate candidates for permanent membership in a reformed Security Council, Palau wishes at this time to specifically endorse only Japan. Japan's stellar record of contribution to the United Nations and its leadership in international initiatives for many years constitute a solid and undeniable basis for its assumption of permanent membership in the Security Council.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): We would like to associate ourselves with the call — made by the representatives of many delegations who have spoken before us — for bold and comprehensive reform of the United Nations system. We agree that such reform should aim for the greatest possible effectiveness, credibility, legitimacy and transparency.

We are also convinced of the need for enhanced cooperation among the organs of the United Nations. In that respect, Germany has suggested, first, strengthening the role of the General Assembly by better focussing and streamlining our work; secondly, making use of the potential of the Economic and Social Council as the central organ for decision-making on economic and social issues and as a partner of the Security Council in peacekeeping and peace-building; and thirdly, opening up forums on peacekeeping to a wider group of interested States among the United Nations membership, thus ensuring better interaction between the membership and the Security Council.

Among our efforts to increase the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations, reform of the Security Council is certainly among the most important. In recent years, the responsibilities and competences of the Security Council have constantly expanded. The number of conflicts demanding Council involvement is increasing. In the future, we want to place even more stress on crisis prevention and peace-building. Such a comprehensive approach will require

additional resources as well as closer cooperation among Member States and among United Nations organs.

At the same time, the Council must deal with new threats to international security. Failing States, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction raise the question of whether the Charter and international law provide the instruments necessary to deal with those new challenges. The responsibility to protect, the legality of pre-emptive military action and the question of how to prevent impunity in cases of gross human rights violations are some of the issues that must be addressed. In that regard, we are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in early December.

The Security Council has responded to some of these new threats by embarking on an increasingly legislative role, setting rules for the international community. That is true for the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and for that of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), as well as for resolution 1566 (2004) on terrorism, adopted by the Council as recently as 8 October this year.

When the Security Council legislates, it sets rules for the United Nations membership as a whole. That means that 15 Security Council members decide and 176 United Nations Members plus 191 parliaments are excluded from the decision-making process. Against that background, it is essential to change the structure of the Council of 1945 to enable it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Here, two elements, in our view, are of the utmost importance: first, the Security Council — especially when is it legislating — needs more legitimacy through better representativity; and secondly, the Security Council must include, on a permanent basis, major resource providers and major regional players. To face those challenges, the Council must be able to implement its decisions effectively and must be seen as legitimate. We believe that the Council can achieve that only if it reflects the political changes of the past 50 years and today's geopolitical realities.

The conclusion to be drawn from this need to adapt the Security Council to today's demands is essentially twofold.

First, the composition of the Council should reflect the growth in United Nations membership and give the Council added legitimacy by increasing the number of permanent as well as non-permanent members. Decolonization, new non-nuclear global players, the end of the cold war, the increase in United Nations membership to 191 countries — all those developments should be mirrored in the composition and working methods of the Security Council.

Secondly, all regions of the South should be represented by permanent members. That would offer us the chance to further enhance the voice of the developing world in the Council. We do not agree with those who want to deny permanent seats to the developing world in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Expanding the Council only by increasing the number of non-permanent seats would not change the structure of the Council; on the contrary, adding only non-permanent seats would cement the outdated structure of 1945.

Therefore, in our view, countries that are willing and able to make a particularly meaningful contribution to the maintenance of world peace should become permanent members. That applies to major resource providers among the developed countries as well as to major players in the developing world.

For those reasons, we have decided to take on the responsibility associated with a permanent seat, and we support the readiness of Brazil, India and Japan to do the same. Again, I would like to stress that we consider it particularly important that Africa also be adequately represented among the new permanent members.

We look forward to the ideas of the High-level Panel, as we believe that they will provide very important new impetus for the crucial question of reform. I am confident that, during the present session of the General Assembly, all of us will work together on that question with commitment and creativity.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the General Assembly in your usual outstanding manner. I should like to express to you our gratitude for having devoted the meetings of the past two days to the consideration of agenda items 11 and 53, relating, respectively, to the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) and to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the

membership of the Security Council and related matters.

My statement will deal only with item 53 of the agenda. In that connection, Sir, we wish first of all to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia, who during the previous session chaired in an able and dedicated manner the Open-ended Working Group charged with considering this important question. We wish also to commend his two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. The excellent report before us today is an accurate reflection of their strong belief in the importance of the task entrusted to them: to meet the deep aspirations of the States and peoples of the world to see rapid and substantial reform in the Security Council in terms of both its composition and its functioning.

That strong aspiration can be explained by the following: the accession since 1960 of a large number of States to national sovereignty; the extent and complexity of the tasks confronting the United Nations today; the recent emergence of new challenges to international peace and security; and the desire for a more transparent and more democratic management of our Organization, which we hold so dear.

All of those factors should lead us to cross, in a positive and progressive spirit, the Rubicon and to transform the Security Council into an organ that is truly representative of Member States and that is better prepared to carry out the tasks with which it is entrusted in the Charter of the United Nations. Such a readjustment is even more necessary given that the ratio of Security Council members to General Assembly members, which was 11 to 51 in 1945, or 21.56 per cent, is distinctly higher than the current ratio, which is only 15 to 191, or 7.85 per cent.

These figures illustrate the considerable decline in the rate of representation of Member States in the Security Council, and show that an important United Nations organ is frozen in time, a prisoner of its own procedures, whereas the international context has undergone profound transformations since 1945.

In view of the magnitude of the task ahead of us, Africa — with all 55 African Member States speaking with one voice — has already clearly indicated its firm will to play a part in a restructured Security Council that is adapted to its environment. Indeed the declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity — which has since become the African Union — adopted at Harare on 4 June 1997 recommended an expansion of the Security Council to 26 members. In that framework, the African continent would have two permanent and five non-permanent seats which it would allocate to African States according to a system of a rotation based on criteria predetermined by the Africans themselves.

Senegal shares the view of the majority of States that the right to veto is inequitable, discriminatory and anachronistic, and that therefore we need progressively to eliminate it, in the meantime reducing its scope of application to draft resolutions relating to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Against that backdrop, I wish to reiterate here a proposal that the delegation of Senegal made in 1997 that an in-depth debate be taken up with the current permanent members of the Security Council in order to work with them to arrive at realistic approaches to the temporary use of the veto.

Another important issue considered by the Working Group involves the criteria that must be met in order to be a member of the Security Council. There are two, set out in Article 23 of the Charter: the capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and respect for the principle of equitable geographic representation. While the second condition should pose no problem, the first is sometimes seen from a restrictive point of view as relating only to financial contributions to peacekeeping operations and their implementation.

Senegal, which, since joining the United Nations, has been a major contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations, cannot accept such a narrow definition. We must therefore take into account the human aspect of contributions to peacekeeping operations as well as new criteria such as the rule of law and a sense of international responsibility on the part of Member States.

My delegation welcomes the report's view of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Throughout the years we have noted a worrisome trend towards the increasing pre-eminence of the Security Council over the General Assembly. Indeed, the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, more and more

frequently is seized with questions falling within a broader scope than that of its mandate. I refer here to the numerous thematic items that are considered by the Security Council, which are, according to the letter and spirit of the Charter, within the purview of the General Assembly.

A rebalancing of the tasks of the Security Council and the General Assembly is therefore necessary. To that end, it would suffice to work on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Charter. The effectiveness of the future action of our universal Organization is at stake.

I wish in conclusion to reiterate my delegation's determination to support all initiatives that will need to be undertaken in order to meet the challenge of reforming the Security Council. In that difficult but feasible exercise, all of us without exception will need plenty of realism, pragmatism and faith in the future in order to contribute to strengthening the credibility of the Security Council, an organ so vital to the structure of the United Nations and, for that reason, so useful in the promotion of international peace and security.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): On item 11, I would like to thank and express my most sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his very effective and balanced presentation of the annual report of the Security Council. We have a vision, we have good suggestions, and a sense of direction. There has definitely been an improvement as far as transparency, inclusiveness and accountability are concerned.

Of course, a lot more remains to be done, as Ambassador Baali of Algeria, among many others, has pointed out. We are sure that the High-level Panel report will offer a meaningful contribution to our thoughts on this issue.

I will come now to the other item on our agenda, the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and related matters. Our most sincere appreciation goes to the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for the commitment, political flair and determination that he has shown in pushing forward the agenda. My thanks and sincere appreciation also go to Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein for their outstanding contributions.

I will focus here on a few key principles — in fact six principles — that Italy feels are crucial for carrying out successful reform.

Principle No. 1: broad consensus. Like any constitutional reform in any of our countries (I mean those countries that have a written constitution), reform of the Security Council should not have divisive repercussions within the membership, otherwise it will defeat the very purpose of United Nations reform. Any reform proposal will have to build upon a broad political consensus. Every effort should therefore be made by all of us, in a spirit of flexibility and pragmatism, to promote an approach that will be able to command broad support in the Assembly. From this point of view, the Secretary-General's Panel, and if I may say so, the Secretary-General himself, should seek to promote such consensus for an equitable and comprehensive reform proposal. I note that even countries that are in favour of an increase in the number of permanent members are well aware of the need for broad consensus, since only broad consensus will prevent disaffection among Member States, which would otherwise be tempted to disengage from the process. If States disengage, there will be no possibility of creating a more effective and efficient United Nations.

In this vein, may I recall what Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said yesterday. He said, "We would encourage all Member States to engage constructively in the debate in order to find a solution on which all can agree." Let me also quote what our Russian colleague, Ambassador Denisov, said a few hours ago: "the achievement of the broadest possible consensus should remain the key benchmark in the reform process." Today and yesterday many other colleagues, from Algeria to China and New Zealand (on behalf of Canada, Australia, New Zealand), Argentina and Mexico, inter alia, have spoken along the same lines about the need for a broad consensus.

Principle No. 2: the current imbalance in the North-South presence on the Security Council. There is a fundamental and urgent need to address this issue, if we wish to have a Security Council more in tune with the world of today, and therefore more credible and effective. I think that there is definitely common ground among the Membership here as well. But I doubt whether it would make sense, given the widely perceived need for more equitable representation, to increase the number of permanent members by five

seats, and give 40 per cent of the benefit to two countries of the industrialized world. There has to be a better way to more effectively redress the North-South imbalance.

Principle No. 3: comprehensiveness. In other words, what is needed, and what we want, is a "whole-package approach" in the reform process, one that is aimed at strengthening the United Nations and enhancing its ability to meet current and future challenges effectively in the field of peace and security, and also, and with equal priority, in the field of development. We will have to address policy, as well as institutional, issues, above and beyond the matter of Security Council enlargement. Among those issues, I would mention, inter alia, the refocusing of the interrelationship among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council; and the redefining of the working methods of the Security Council. I would like here to recall what our colleague from New Zealand expressed so clearly yesterday, when he said, "first, including Security Council reform within a broader package may increase rather than decrease the prospect of achieving consensus on it. Secondly, the Security Council is at the core of the United Nation's response to threats to international security ... Accordingly, proposals for enhancing collective action in dealing with a broad spectrum of threats cannot sensibly be separated from the issue of the representativeness of the Council. What the Council does and who is sitting on it are inextricably linked".

In other words, it would make neither common nor political sense to de-link our proceedings: reforming and enlarging the Security Council during the first months of 2005, and proceeding on the substantive issues of what the Security Council, and in more general terms, the United Nations, must deliver, in the second part of the year, in the framework of the major event of 2005, as well as in the follow up to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel.

In fact, on the contrary, separate consideration of the issue of Security Council expansion will not prevent the sidelining of the other major recommendations of the Panel. That is why we support a comprehensive review in 2005 of major United Nations conferences, within the umbrella framework of the Millenniums Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

As for the report of the High-level Panel, allow me, again, to recall what Ambassador Jones Parry said in urging the Panel to make sure that its proposals reinforce the Council's ability to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter. I would also here reiterate the thought so aptly expressed by our New Zealand colleague when he said, "we urge Member States not to seek to pre-empt the Panel's report, but rather to respect the Panel's independence and keep an open mind on possible ways forward".

Principle No. 4: inclusiveness, and principle No. 5: accountability. I will address them together because they are inextricably linked. I will begin by recalling, once again, what our New Zealand colleague said yesterday: "we look to enhanced opportunities for Security Council membership for all Member Sates, not just a privileged few".

That is why the proposal to add new permanent members, even without veto power, would entail serious drawbacks. It would be highly divisive among the United Nations membership, and would establish a new layer of hierarchy within the Council itself. Do we really want to have a first-class membership, a second-class membership and a third-class membership? The United Nations, as the Chinese Foreign Minister recently recalled, is not a corporate concern, a company or a fund listed on the stock exchange, with class A shares, class B shares and class C shares.

Whatever the so-called G-4 may say, and however attractive the packaging of that reform scenario might be, the fact is that we would be laying the foundation for what would become, by definition, new privileges for some members to the detriment of others. And that would go against the tide in a world where priority is now given, and has to be given, to an ongoing process of democratization in the management of international relations through multilateral institutions. Every Member State of this Assembly, as a stake-holder, should feel comfortable and should feel that it will be able to participate and contribute more equitably. I ask you, would the addition of new permanent members, who are not accountable to the membership through elections, make this happen?

Let us keep clear in our minds that the enlargement of the Security Council, whatever shape it takes, will be limited. The figure generally mentioned

is around 24 members. With a higher number of members, the Security Council would not be effective and efficient. If that is the case, it has to be clear to all Member States that we have a zero-sum game. If we increase the number of permanent members, there will be less room for the rest of the membership, which must compete for the non-permanent seats. We will give seats, let us suppose, to five Member States, which would become permanent members. What we give to them we will be taking away from what the other 181 Member States have the right to expect with regard to their possibility of making a direct contribution to shaping the Security Council's actions and policies.

Let us not forget that after 60 years, there are still 77 countries — 40 per cent of the membership — that have never served on the Security Council. How best can we address that situation? Certainly not by increasing the number of members of the Security Council and by freezing more than half the increase — five of nine seats — in favour of a few members.

Moreover, adding new permanent members would, by definition, go against the principle of accountability, according to which all members of the Security Council should undergo periodic scrutiny through elections in the General Assembly. Let us not forget that in its action, the Organization is stressing more and more — and preaching to Members — the need to improve governance. And improving governance means improving accountability because accountability is the substance of democracy and the foundation for healthy and sound development.

Principle No. 6: is the need to strengthen the role and the weight of the regional and geopolitical factor in the Security Council. On this issue, too, I feel that there is common ground among the membership, and we will have to build on it. Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa spoke very clearly yesterday of the importance of placing greater emphasis on Chapter VIII of the Charter and on the operational relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations. Ambassador Baali of Algeria and others have spoken along the same lines.

I would therefore say that any proposal for reform of the Security Council should focus on the importance of the regional and geopolitical factor, regional constituencies and regional interests rather than national interests. To that end, a closer relationship should be built between elected members and their regional constituencies. That would enhance the accountability of elected members and ensure that deliberations are perceived as more legitimate.

In other words, more should be done to give relevance and weight to regional and geopolitical realities within the United Nations system and in the Security Council. As far as Italy is concerned, as a founding member of the European Union, the depositary of its treaties and the host of the solemn signature on 29 October of the new European Constitution, we believe that today's European Union, with the strength 25 of members, has a fundamental contribution to make to the purposes of the United Nations. Italy is working to find, on a consensual basis, ways and means to allow the European Union to speak in the Security Council with a single, more influential voice. We realize, of course, that it will not be an easy path and that within the United Nations each regional constituency finds itself at a different stage of political and socio-economic development. Nonetheless, we feel that we must stay the course and not jeopardize the achievement of that goal.

In the meantime, to sum up, we will have to shape Security Council reform so that such reform better responds to the contribution that each Member State is capable of and willing to offer for the maintenance of peace and security and the other purposes of the United Nations, as foreseen in Article 23, paragraph 1 of the Charter; gives more appropriate weight to the regional and geopolitical factor while at the same time redressing the current North-South imbalance; and takes into account the need to ensure, through the election of all members of the Security Council, accountability, inclusiveness and ownership by the membership.

To accommodate all those principles, values and needs, we will have to be flexible, dispense with entrenched positions and keep our minds open to new and bold scenarios of reform. That reform could be centred, for example, on the concept of the rotation of elected members for a given seat, not excluding the possibility of a longer duration and/or a more frequent presence in the Council than what is currently foreseen by the Charter.

Many colleagues — Algeria, Uruguay, Mexico, Senegal, as we heard a few minutes ago, and many others — have in fact referred to such a scenario of

rotating elected members in regional seats. We are convinced that such a scenario, which would safeguard the fundamental principles of the kind of democracy in which we believe, would be able to command a broad consensus across the membership. If the High-level Panel recommends a proposal for reform of that kind in any of its many possible variations, the proposal will no doubt receive the strongest support across the board. Let us work for it. Let us have vision and not just focus on our narrow national interests.

Mr. Diarra (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The document submitted by Mr. Julian Hunte and his two Vice-Chairmen faithfully reflects the current state of affairs on the question. We have also taken note of the report to the fifty-eighth session of 13 September 2004. We have given the Open-ended Working Group the mandate of pursuing the current efforts, taking into account the results achieved since its creation under resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993. We have also taken into account the experience acquired at the last session of the General Assembly.

The question of equitable representation on the Security Council is one of the most complex that our Organization has ever faced. But my delegation believes that the issue is a worthy one. It is clear that the process of democratizing the organs of the United Nations and making their working methods more transparent has broken down when one notes that the number of Security Council members represented at the time of its creation was 21.56 per cent of the total number of Member States of the Organization, and today represents no more than 7.85 per cent of Member States.

The Security Council is in reality increasingly becoming the centre of the Organization, to the detriment of the other principal organs, in particular the General Assembly. The Council's thematic debates address questions traditionally reserved for other organs. Likewise, its regulatory functions are growing, as demonstrated by the adoption of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1566 (2004). Moreover, the use of the veto is not in the collective interest; it conforms to the strictly national interests of the countries with the veto power.

Given all those circumstances, some of which are almost as old as the Organization itself, it is more appropriate than ever to keep the debate open on the two groups of questions indicated by the Working Group. Those questions concern, on the one hand, the expansion of the membership of the Security Council and related issues and, on the other, the Council's working methods and the transparency of its work.

With regard to the issue of the representativeness of the Council, it would be only just from a historical point of view to allow those nations that were freed from the colonial yoke following the creation of the United Nations to be represented equitably. Such redress of historical injustice should primarily benefit the African and Asian States. Furthermore, there are a number of crisis situations in our continent, which the United Nations currently has under consideration.

Africa therefore wishes to assume its share of responsibility in the effort to maintain international peace and security. Our continent is making contribution in that respect, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, through the establishment of subregional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as the more recently created Peace and Security Council, which covers the entire continent. We are also strengthening our cooperation with the United Nations system in the area of conflict prevention and management.

Mindful of that responsibility, Africa adopted a Declaration in 1997 at Harare, affirming the vital need to guarantee equitable geographic representation within the Security Council. Hence, there is a need to expand the membership to reflect the increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations. The expansion should affect the two categories of membership, with the expanded Council having 26 members. Two permanent seats should go to the African continent, and the number of non-permanent seats for Africa on the expanded Council should increase to five — as opposed to the current three. The African States would themselves designate the permanent African members, and their decision could then be endorsed by the General Assembly.

My delegation also believes that certain industrialized countries whose contribution to the Organization in terms of both financial resources and

peacekeeping should benefit from permanent seats in the expanded council.

Furthermore, certain developing countries should also be given favourable consideration by virtue of the size of their population and their contribution to the United Nations, as well as their role in international trade, with its new geographical realities.

The new permanent members will have the same prerogatives and the same powers as the current members. Africa supports the gradual limiting of the use of the veto until its total elimination can be achieved.

My delegation believes, however, that no decision should be taken before general agreement is reached on that group of questions or on those relating to the second group of questions concerning the working methods of the Council. The effort to restructure the Security Council needs to be sustained and pursued, but it should not be subjected to timetable constraints.

On the question of the transparency of the working methods of the Council, the report notes recent improvements, such as those listed in paragraph 60. In my delegation's view, these efforts aimed at improvement must be continued along the lines provided for in Assembly resolutions 51/193 of 17 December 1996 and 58/126 of 19 December 2003.

As to new threats, my delegation is looking forward to the conclusions of the report of the panel set up by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, on the question of the use of the veto, my delegation believes that with regard to vital questions relating to a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression, the General Assembly, according to resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, could make recommendations to Member States in the common interest with regard to those actions to be undertaken.

Mr. Sar (Cambodia): It is my honour, on behalf of the delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Thanks in good measure to your leadership, I am fully confident that your experience and skills will bring the work of this session to a successful conclusion, thus helping us to achieve our common goal of creating a better world for all to live in.

As everyone is aware, conflicts in the world are on the increase. They extend throughout continents and are growing in complexity. The responsibility of the Council and the demands on its competence have therefore been constantly expanding. Given the need for the Council to be able to function effectively and efficiently under such fluid circumstances, it is inconceivable that its work could be carried out successfully without changing the current composition of the membership and increasing the number of seats — for both permanent and non-permanent members alike.

In this context, reform of the Security Council is essential in order to enhance the legitimacy not only of the Council in particular, but of the Organization in general. As many earlier speakers have said — and the Royal Government of Cambodia would like to reiterate this — in order for the Council to maintain its relevance and credibility, it certainly needs to evolve to complement ever-changing global realities. The Security Council does not exist separately from the rest of the world, but is a part of it. Our collective efforts should be focused to ensure that that subsidiary organ is representative of the membership, not only in terms of physical numbers, but also in providing equal ground for all Member States to voice their concerns and aspirations concerning matters related to world peace and security.

The more balanced and comprehensive representation of all continents would lead to a better sense of ownership of the Security Council on the part of all States. This means that the permanent members of the Council must represent all of the major regions. This could be achieved by increasing the number of members of the Council, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

My delegation is of the view that the most important criterion for States seeking permanent membership in the Council is the capacity to make a meaningful and sustainable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the realization of the purposes of the Organization. Such States should be provided with the opportunity to become more involved in the work of the Security Council. In this context, we particularly support the candidacy of Japan, together with that of India and Germany, for permanent membership in the Council.

Countries such as Japan, India and Germany continue to play an active role in the United Nations. For example, Japan, with a rate of assessment close to 20 per cent, bears a significant part of the United Nations budget, including the peacekeeping budget and the budgets of the two international criminal tribunals. India has one of the largest populations in the world and has the ability and the capacity to discharge the critical task of participating in the structuring of a just and dynamic world order. On many occasions the input of such countries could be essential. Yet they are often overlooked by the major players in the Council, illustrating the fact that the Security Council remains a playing field for only a select few. From time to time, there has been a great deal of talk and discussion on the need to enlarge the membership of the Security Council and to strengthen that body to be more democratic and more efficient and to play a more important role in international politics.

It is now, therefore, the right time to propose an initiative to set up a mechanism of consultation among Member States to devise modalities, criteria and guidelines with regard to the membership of the Security Council, including its size, in the form of an appropriate rule applicable and acceptable to all Member States vis-à-vis the question of geographical representation. To that end, the interested Member States will have equal status to be represented as they wish.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): At the outset, let me congratulate the past Chairman and the members of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their excellent and innovative work during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to thank all the members of the United Nations Secretariat who have helped in putting together the various reports.

Today, we have before us the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2). Indeed it is an informative report. It allows us to look at the work of the Council and concentrate on the points where we feel improvements and adjustments are needed.

In the last few years, we were all pleased to see improvements in the working methods of the Council — its readiness to be more open, to cooperate more closely, both with the other organs of the United Nations system and with regional partners, and to improve the process of consultations with the wider United Nations membership.

That has translated, among other things, into more open meetings and briefings, allowing for important exchanges of information between the Council members and the wider United Nations membership and promptly conveying their respective views to each other, as well as more substantial interaction with the various regional organizations.

We favour and hope for the continuation of the efforts towards more transparency, accessibility and the involvement of all non-Council members in the daily work of the Council. That is of crucial importance if the Security Council aspires to reflect the views, tendencies, hopes and goals of the world community.

Last year the Secretary-General announced the creation of a High-level Panel of eminent persons to assess new threats and challenges facing our world today and to suggest ways to effectively deal with them, including through reform of the multilateral international system. We fully support those efforts and look forward to the forthcoming relevant report.

Reform of the Security Council remains a key issue. The Council is becoming more active, with an expanding role and decisions of far-reaching consequences. The restructuring of its membership and the increase in its effectiveness thus become a vital part of the process of revitalizing the United Nations system, which aims at strengthening the Organization's ability to meet the challenges lying ahead.

Expansion of the membership of the Security Council is an issue extensively discussed and widely supported, although no consensus has so far emerged on how and when that will be done. Greece believes that the Council will be strengthened by an increase in both its permanent and non-permanent membership. That will reflect the new international environment and truly represent the views and aspirations of the present day international community in charting the Council's actions and strategic directions. The expansion will add to the Council's legitimacy and ultimately to its accountability.

An enlarged Security Council, in both its permanent and non-permanent membership, should guarantee equitable geographical representation and an

enhanced voice for the developing world. There can be no security without development, and vice versa. This will enable the Council to discharge its responsibilities more effectively. At the same time, the Council will be able to respond to the threats and challenges of the modern world in a more comprehensive manner.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I will try to be brief in my statement and go straight to the point. Croatia welcomes the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly as an informative and comprehensive document. Through its actions, the Council is further strengthening its relevance, not only in the field of international peace and security, but in the legislative area as well. The latter is becoming a matter of increased interest that goes beyond the Council's membership and should be comprehensively debated. Against this background, the initiative of Austria to convene a panel on the issue of the Security Council as world legislator is particularly welcome.

The Council's enhanced role requires more transparent relations between the Council and the General Assembly and calls for a wide-ranging debate among the United Nations membership about the reform of the Council and its strategic position in the years to come.

When it comes to the reform of the Security Council, I have the honour to present the Assembly with three main points concerning the position of Croatia.

Croatia is of the opinion that without comprehensive reform the United Nations will not be able to successfully meet all the challenges presented to us by the new century. Security Council reform is an indispensable step in that direction. Croatia fully supports enlargement of the Security Council in both categories. A formula for enlarging the Council to 24 seats seems to be the most appropriate one, considering the size of the United Nations membership and the need for an efficient Council. Croatia strongly advocates an additional seat in the enlarged Council for the countries belonging to the Eastern European Group.

Mindful of the different positions among the Member States in regard to the scope and substance of Security Council reform, Croatia stands ready to embrace a pragmatic approach to the matter. We remain open to other proposals concerning the Council's enlargement, provided they enjoy support among Member States and respect the interests of the Eastern European Group.

Croatia consistently supports improvement in the work of the Security Council with a view to enhancing its transparency and securing adequate regional representation. We are fully aware of the legitimate interests of the largest countries among us. At the same time, we have to emphasize the need to take into account the positions of smaller countries as well, especially those which have never had the privilege of serving on the Council. In the future allocation of the Council's non-permanent seats, they should be given the priority.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): It has become an annual ritual. The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been on the General Assembly's agenda at least since the Assembly established, through resolution 48/26, an Open-ended Working Group to address the issue. The Group has been working with no breakthroughs except on matters that are not at the core of the reforms. These include progress towards improving the methods of work of the Security Council, for which I thank the Working Group. The only achievement so far has been that the General Assembly has remained seized of the matter. Now is the time to act, and it is the hope of delegation of Uganda that the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly will be different and will present firm recommendations on the size and membership of the Council, both in terms of permanent and non-permanent members, in order to reflect the geopolitical and other realities of the world today.

The arguments for equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, including on criteria for membership, such as equitable geographical representation, are well known, have been adequately elaborated over many years and, therefore, need not be repeated here. What is needed now is the political will to effect the necessary changes, especially on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The victors of the Second World War created a privileged club of their own composed of five permanent members, each wielding a veto. To create another class of privileged members, this time based on those who wield economic ... ght, is not an entirely comfortable concept, but sometimes in the world of political realties, logic does not carry the day. We

therefore have to be practical and pragmatic. The ideal would have been equal entitlement of all Member States to Security Council seats, permanent or non-permanent, in order for the Security Council to have enhanced legitimacy and credibility.

That said, my delegation would go along with the suggestion to create a category of permanent members without a veto and to increase the number of non-permanent members. For the former category, Africa should be entitled to at least two seats, and other developing countries should also be represented. The criteria for this should be worked out either by region or globally. We would prefer regional representation.

With regard to the veto — and, once again, for pragmatic reasons — the status quo should be maintained. We can begin next year with the expansion of the non-permanent membership and the creation of a new category of permanent members without a veto. In the meantime, we should think of developing guidelines on how the veto can be wisely exercised in the interests of world peace and security. The final stage in the reform process would be a consideration of the abolishment of the veto at the appropriate time.

Let me briefly touch on other matters. Very often in the Security Council, reports critical of Member States have been discussed and resolutions adopted without affording the States concerned an opportunity to be heard, in the case of States that are not members of the Security Council. The right to be heard is a cardinal rule of natural justice. It is, therefore, only fair to afford such a Member the opportunity to be heard before a resolution is adopted. The present rule that allows a Member to participate silently in the deliberations of Security Council without the right to speak should be done away with. Once a Member is granted the right to participate, its representative should automatically be allowed to speak.

The Security Council has progressively invited more non-members to participate in debates on thematic topics. That is a welcome move. These debates enrich the outcome of the Security Council's deliberations. Their scope and frequency should be increased. The list of speakers should be arranged alphabetically by country name rather than, as is the present practice, Council members all speaking first. In that way, the debates would be interactive. There should also be more open meetings of the Security Council. In other words, the Council should present a more human face and should not be an unapproachable, mysterious and intimidating institution.

Lastly, there should be more dialogue among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General. For instance, monthly consultations between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly should be institutionalized. There is nothing in the Charter, for instance, to prevent joint meetings of the Security Council and General Assembly to discuss a particular topic.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): The delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in addressing this agenda item, would first of all, Mr. President, wish to pay a special tribute to the efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly, who, by assuming the chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, sought to give increased political emphasis and direction to its work.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/58/47 reflects in a very substantive way the extent of the exchanges of views among delegations on the following six points that were systematically addressed: size of an enlarged Security Council; question of regional representation; criteria for membership; relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council; accountability; and the use of the veto. Those exchanges of views revealed, however, the complex nature of the subject matter under discussion and the wide divergence of opinion that continues to exist among United Nations Member States on almost every aspect of these topics.

The views expressed by Member States on these points are clearly set out in the report. The task of the international community at this stage is to ensure further progress towards concluding the discussions on these key issues, taking into account all the competing and contending ideas, in order to implement the decision of our heads of State or Government reflected in the Millennium Declaration, in which they resolved, inter alia, to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

As we go forward with the implementation of this mandate, we will also have to bear in mind that the

Secretary-General, in his September 2003 statement to the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, drew attention to the urgent need for the Security Council to regain the confidence of States and of world public opinion by demonstrating its ability to deal effectively with the most difficult issues and by becoming more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as of the geopolitical realities of today. To that end, as we all are aware, he established his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which is also likely to address the question of Security Council reform.

We therefore need to manage these two processes in a manner that will allow the United Nations, as its moves towards the observance of the sixtieth anniversary of its founding, to benefit not only from the collective wisdom of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel but also from the well-thought-out positions of Member States on all aspects of this issue that have been advanced over the past 10 years.

What the international community must, therefore, seek to achieve in any reform of the Security Council, in the opinion of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, is the multilateralization of the international security policies of States and the avoidance of the marginalization of the Security Council in matters relating to threats to international peace and security.

In undertaking this comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the international community would need to address, basically, the composition of the Council, its decision-making process and its working methods. While some progress has been made with respect to the latter, the other two areas still present difficult choices.

Any Security Council reform must, therefore, result in a change in the Council's composition not only so as to reflect more adequately the current geopolitical realities at the global level, but also in order that it may become more representative of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations. Such a change in its composition would, in our opinion, strengthen the Security Council's own legitimacy and effectiveness, while not affecting in any way its efficiency.

On the related issue of decision-making in the Security Council, it would be recalled that the last vestiges of the unanimity rule, which had been the general rule for decision-making in the League of Nations, are today to be found in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which requires the affirmative votes of nine members, including those of the five permanent members, for a decision of the Council on matters other than those of a procedural nature.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group lists in annex III the draft resolutions of the Council that were not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council during the period 16 February 1946 to 21 April 2004. What is clear from the listing provided by the Secretariat is that all five permanent members have, at one time or another, exercised the right of veto, some more often than others and at particular times during that period. Any reform of the veto power will require, in the first instance, an honest analysis by the five permanent members of the use to which the veto power has been put and whether such use has contributed to or endangered further the maintenance of international peace and security. Without agreement among the permanent members on the judicious use of the veto, there is little prospect for any meaningful change on this aspect of the reform of decision-making in the Security Council.

Substantial and meaningful reform of the Security Council would require an amendment to the Charter and must, therefore, be the result of a broad consensus not only among the membership of the United Nations as a whole but also, and more particularly, among the permanent members of the Security Council. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago would therefore urge the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group to continue to build upon the progress already made. In that regard, we should strive at the fifty-ninth session to make specific proposals that can be the subject of further intense informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.